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A PEASANT SAGE OF JAPAN

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A PEASANT SAGE OF JAPAN

THE LIFE AND WORK OF SONTOKU NINOMIYA

TRANSLATED FROM

THE HŌTOKUKI

BY

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United Theological Seminary
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The Evangelical

Dedicated

TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

WITH A GRATEFUL HEART

AN APPRECIATION

Sontoku Ninomiya was born in Kayama-mura in 1787 and died in 1856 at Imaichi. His life of seventy years was one of continuous fighting against the most disheartening circumstances, and of extraordinary self-sacrifice for the benefit of the people and in the service of his country.

Nature, not man, was his teacher. He grew up in the pretty village of Kayama, the sublime mountain Fuji-san towering in the distance, and the beautiful fields of Kozu spreading far and wide towards the sea. Hence one of his short poems ran :

> "No sound, no scent,
> Yet Heaven and Earth
> Proclaiming always
> Unwritten Sacred Laws."

The "Hōtokusha" is one of Sontoku's most important social organisations. It is a co-operative credit society founded with a high moral purpose ; and it was started about twenty

years before similar societies were formed by Schulze, Delitzsch, and Raiffeissen in Germany.

Sontoku worked during the last generation of the Feudal Period, one of the darkest times in the history of Japan, and the condition of the country called forth Sontoku's cry for Sincerity, Industry, Economy, and Service, and his remarkable life of self-sacrifice.

KOSUKE TOMEOKA,
Hon. Sec. of the Hotoku Society.

PREFACE

BY THE TRANSLATOR

JAPAN has some treasures too good to be kept to herself, and of these not the least valuable is the Life and Work of Sontoku Ninomiya. Sontoku fed tens of thousands; reformed abandoned and desperate characters; removed mountains of insuperable difficulties; and performed many other marvels in the service of "Heaven, Earth, and Mankind."

Soon after his death his great disciple, Kōkei Tomita, published a record of his life and work in the *Hōtokuki*, a book which is still proving a light to hundreds of thousands in Japan, and a great help and inspiration to all kinds of social workers.

Hence this translation. I have not rendered the original word for word, but have endeavoured as far as possible to translate the spirit of Sontoku and his principal deeds as recorded in the *Hōtokuki*.

Some parts I have translated very minutely, sentence after sentence, even to taxing readers'

patience, where I thought it necessary to reveal the inner life of Japan in order that they might understand the whole book better. But other parts I have translated as briefly as possible, not to tax readers needlessly.

I have compiled the Appendix in the hope of throwing some light on the grand life and spirit of Sontoku, which were one with the "Sacred Truths of Heaven and Earth," and which will outlive his social works and even his teaching, and prove of great service to people of all countries and all ages. Most of the quotations in the Appendix are taken from the *Ninomiyao Yawa*, or *Ninomiya's Evening Talks*, the work of another great disciple of Sontoku's, Shōkei Fukuzumi.

For the revision of my English, as well as for helpful advice, I owe much to Mr. J. M. McGregor, B.A., and Miss E. M. Pauling.

Any criticism on the life and work of Sontoku Ninomiya, I shall be grateful to receive. Also suggestions to remove any imperfection in the translation and appendix, will be carefully considered when I next revise the book.

TADASU YOSHIMOTO.

WARNBOROUGH ROAD, OXFORD.

INTRODUCTION

The story of the Japanese sage and reformer, Sontoku Kinjiro Ninomiya, presented to English readers in this little volume, has a many-sided interest. Born in 1787, he died in 1856, eleven years before the beginning of the great modern era of the Restoration in 1867. His life belongs, therefore, to the days of the old feudal order just before its disappearance, and affords most valuable glimpses into social conditions which have now passed away. The contrast of extravagance and want induced by the reckless expenditure of the great lords recalls the condition of the French peasantry in the eighteenth century. In the midst of these ruined villages and impoverished estates Sontoku gradually accomplished his restorative work. Sprung from a line of small farmers, he knew the habits of the tillers of the soil. The bitter hardships of his early years generated in him an immense sympathy with the

sufferers around him. When first called in to repair the ruined fortunes of an ancient house, he imposes on the landowner the straitest duty of retrenchment. He passes from one task to another, working out the same principles. "Live within your income," he cries to the feudal chief: "Labour to fulfil your duty in the great harmony of Heaven and Earth" is his injunction to the despondent and the idle cottagers. He studies the local conditions, the possibilities of soil and situation, the numbers and habits of each family. He inspires confidence, stimulates courage, and renews hope. He aims at restoring prosperity by recreating character, evoking energy, and insisting on regularity of work and continuous industry. He himself shared the life of those among whom he toiled; ate their simple food and wore their cotton clothes; refused all official dignity, and bore the burdens of his people, asking no reward. "Why," he asked, "should men who want to serve their country receive a salary for doing so?" The disinterestedness which he practised himself he expected of others. His test of sincerity more than once rose to the height of the

command, "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor," and was obeyed. Treating each case differently, with a penetrating insight into character, "My way," said he, "is to sacrifice oneself to save others."

Here is an ideal of social service of a singularly modern type arising in the midst of a venerable religious tradition. When Sontoku's father sells his last remaining fields to pay the doctor who had attended him in an illness, he feels guilty of filial impiety, because a farm is an ancestral gift. When Sontoku buys back the family lands and restores the house of his forefathers, he rejoices in being able to please their spirits; it was their virtue which had enabled him to do it. To this motive he recurs again and again in his exhortations: "Repay the benevolence of your ancestors"; and when asked what was his religious belief, he replied quaintly, "My religion consists of one spoonful of Shintoism, and a half-spoonful each of Buddhism and Confucianism." As a boy he had read the Confucian texts as he walked; and the will of Heaven and its unvarying "sincerity" were the foundation of his whole theory of life.

He was still a lad when, worshipping in the temple of the Buddhist Kwan-non, he realised that it was the final will of the Buddha to save the people and to give them peace. At one crisis in his plans, when he is harassed by prejudice and suspicion on the part of his lord's retainers, and is pursued with plots by crafty enemies, he seeks relief at a famous Buddhist shrine on Mount Narita, and with constant prayer and ablutions performs a fast of twenty-one days' duration. But religion is with him no outward ceremony or formal lip-service: it is the inspiring power of a life of devotion to others. In the constant analogies from nature which mark his exhortations, the impress of the Confucian conception of the great Order is clearly visible. Heaven and Earth, he taught, were continually at work, and Heaven's love cared for all creatures. Industry and benevolence were thus the two great laws of human conduct.

The disciples who gathered round Sontoku in his latter years, and studied his methods, gradually carried his principles far and wide. The account of his life, reproduced in the following pages, was written in the year after

his death by the greatest of his followers, Kokei Tomita. The Emperor caused it to be widely circulated among his officials; it has been recently republished by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, and is now read all over Japan. It is a unique record in the annals of Oriental philanthropy. Coming with its message of sincerity and goodwill from a culture wholly different from our own, it bears impressive witness to the fundamental identity between the noblest aims of human service in the greatest of the religions of the East and West.

J. ESTLIN CARPENTER.

OXFORD, *October* 1911.

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A PEASANT SAGE OF JAPAN

CHAPTER I

SONTOKU'S CHILDHOOD

Sontoku Kinjiro[1] Ninomiya, a member of the noble Taira clan, was a descendant of the Soga branch of the Ninomiya family, of which there are to-day eight houses in Kayama village, Sagami, all said to be of the same stock. His father's name was Riyemon Ninomiya, and his mother was the daughter of one Kawakubo, of the neighbouring village.

His grandfather Ginyemon, through constant thrift and frugality, had amassed a fortune; but Riyemon, known to the country-side as "the Good," was so generous with gifts and loans, in his response to every applicant, that his money disappeared, his estate dwindled, and he became at length extremely poor. Yet

[1] His parents gave him the name of Kinjiro, but after his death he was given the appellation of Sontoku, which means Respecter of Virtue or The Virtuous.

in his poverty he found content, and never sought any return for his past generosity.

To such conditions, on the 23rd of July in the seventh year of Temmei (1787), Sontoku was born. This first child was followed by a second and a third son, and the three boys were brought up in poverty amid hardships beyond description. When Sontoku was five years old the river Sakawa, on which Kayama-mura is situated, overflowed its banks at Oguchi, and several villages were devastated. Riyemon's farm was converted into a bed of stones, and his poverty grew more and more acute, though he strained every nerve to bring up his three children. Whenever in after years Sontoku referred to this period of his life, his eyes would fill with tears as he told of the self-sacrificing kindness of his parents, and his hearers were always greatly moved by the account.

One year Riyemon fell ill, and on his recovery, finding himself without money to pay the physician, he was forced to sell his farm, for which he received two *ryo*.[1]

"Poverty and riches," said he, "are be-

[1] A gold coin.

stowed by Providence and must be accepted for good or ill. But a farm is an ancestral gift, so if I part with mine how can I escape the sin of filial impiety? Still the medicine must be paid for." So, with a heavy heart, he sought the doctor, and thanking him for his trouble, presented his fee.

Much surprised, the doctor asked, "How have you, poor as you are, managed to bring me this money?"

"True it is," replied Riyemon, "that my poverty is extreme; but were I to make that my excuse for doing nothing to show my gratitude for your kind treatment, how could I hold up my head among men? I still had left in my poverty a tiny farm; this I have sold to discharge my debt."

The doctor was much moved, and expostulated with his neighbour. "I shall not starve though I receive no fee from you. You have sacrificed your farm to meet a present need, but without it how will you support your wife and children in the future? Have I cured your illness only to add to your distress? Pray get back your farm at once and think no more about paying me."

This Riyemon would not consent to, and the doctor continued, "You must not refuse. Wealth and poverty are on a wheel. Though you are poor now, who knows when wealth may come round to you again? Offer me a fee then and I shall be glad to accept it. Surely that will satisfy you, will it not?"

Deeply moved, Riyemon bowed thrice in acceptance of the doctor's proposal, yet in spite of all argument insisted on paying half the amount he had brought.

Riyemon was very fond of *sake*,[1] and in order to gratify his father's taste, Sontoku, though still a child, employed himself making straw sandals which he sold, and with the proceeds was able to buy a small quantity of *sake* every evening. This exhibition of filial devotion pleased his father greatly.

When Sontoku was fourteen, in the twelfth year of Kwansei, Riyemon again became very ill, and grew weaker day by day. All the family were filled with grief, and nursed him constantly, day and night. All their household possessions were sold in a vain attempt to find a cure, and prayers to the gods were

[1] Japanese rice beer.

unceasing. Nothing availed, and on the 26th of September by the will of Providence he died, to the great grief not of his family alone but of the whole community.

Upon the mother now devolved the task of rearing the three children, and their privations and hardships were extreme. At length she said to Sontoku, "I shall endeavour to bring up you and your brother by some means or other, but it is beyond my strength to support your youngest brother as well. Two I may sustain; if I try to keep all, all will starve."

So she took her youngest son to some relatives of her own and begged them to take charge of him. They consented, and the mother returned to the two she had left and said to them, "Now we three must share our hardships bravely together, happy in the thought that our youngest is free from want."

But the mother's nights were sleepless, and her pillow was always wet with tears. Sontoku noticed this and asked her what was the trouble. "Oh," answered his mother, "I have felt some pain lately which has kept me awake; but do not worry, it will soon be gone."

Even as she spoke the poor mother could not restrain her tears, and the boy divined the truth, that she was pining with grief for the loss of her child.

Then he in sympathy said, "I think now that one more small mouth would not add much to our difficulties; and I am going to begin to-morrow to gather fire-wood on the mountain, for sale. In this way I can earn enough to enable us to keep the child ourselves; so you can go and fetch him back."

The mother was overjoyed to hear her son speak in this way. "It is so good of you," said she, "to promise this help. I will go at once and get the child."

"Oh, not to-night, mother," cried Sontoku, stopping her; "you must not go in the middle of the night. Wait until daybreak, and then I can go for him."

But the mother could not wait. "Shall I mind the discomfort of a single midnight journey, when you, young as you are, undertake to provide for the child?"

So she hurried off through the darkness to the next village, where her relatives lived, and telling them of Sontoku's promise, brought

her youngest son home again, and great was the delight of all the family at being reunited.

From this time Sontoku rose at daybreak every morning and set out for a distant mountain to gather faggots, while in the evenings he plaited straw rope and made sandals. Not a moment was wasted. He taxed body and mind to the utmost to relieve his mother's cares, and to earn the support of the family. He carried about with him constantly "Dai Gaku" (Great Learning), from which he read as he walked, thus beginning his study of the works of the sages. As he read aloud, on his way, strangers sometimes wondered if he were mad.

The river Sakawa rises at the foot of Mount Fuji, and after a course of some 100 miles empties into the sea at Odawara. This river was frequently in flood, when it swelled to a violent torrent, bringing down sand and stones, often breaking the levees or dykes built to hold it in its bed, and spreading devastation over the low-lying fields—even destroying houses in the villages. Every year the levees had to be strengthened and repaired,

and it was the custom for every house in the district to send one member to do his part in the work.

From the age of twelve Sontoku had contributed his labour with the rest of the villagers, but on account of his youth he was not able to do a man's part. Sometimes, sighing, he would lift his eyes to heaven with the prayer, "My strength is not sufficient to perform one family's share of the work; I beseech Thee, make me grow into a man quickly."

Once, as he returned home, he thought, "Men pity me because I am an orphan and poor, so they count my work as a full man's service, but I cannot be satisfied with it myself. It is useless to lament over my lack of strength, I must make up for it in some other way."

Accordingly he worked till midnight making straw sandals. At daybreak he was at the river bank, before any one else, and as the others arrived he said to them, "As I am so young I cannot do a man's work, so I am constantly in your debt. I have tried to find some way of repaying your kindness, and though I cannot do that, yet I shall do what little I can by making these sandals and giving

some away each day to different ones who are so kind as to help me."

All admired him for his noble sentiments, and many helped him and accepted the sandals to please him. Yet in spite of his youth Sontoku carried more earth and stones for the embankment than any one of the men, for he worked steadily all day long without stopping to rest with the others. Such unselfish energy moved the neighbours greatly.

Sontoku was one day worshipping at the temple of Kwannon in an adjoining village. As he sat at prayer a travelling priest appeared and, sitting down before the temple, read aloud from a sacred book. His voice was excellent, and the sense of what he read so grand and true that Sontoku was overcome with profound joy.

When the priest finished reading the boy asked him reverently, "What is the name of the book you have just read?"

"It is the Kwannon-Kyo," replied the priest, "the Book of Kwannon."

Sontoku felt in his pocket and presented the priest with some coins, saying, "Please accept this trifling sum; and will you be

kind enough to recite the scripture once more?"

The priest, affected by the boy's earnestness, recited the book in the same way as before, and then left him.

Filled with joy and much enlightened by what he had heard, Sontoku went to the temple in his own village and said to the priest, "How precious is the Kwannon-Kyo! So profound and vast in meaning." And he proceeded to expound the teaching of the book with much eloquence.

The priest was amazed. "I am over sixty," said he, "and during my many years of priesthood I have read the book thousands of times, yet I have never understood its deeper truths; while you, a mere child, clearly comprehend the whole after a single hearing. Surely this is the second coming of the Bodhisattva. I will retire from this temple and you must take my place as priest. Stay, I beg of you, for the sake of the people, whom you shall teach the way of salvation."

But this honour Sontoku declined. "No," said he, "that is not my desire. My first task is to restore my ancestral home and so

please the spirits of my forefathers." So saying he left the temple; but from this time he fully realised that the final will of Buddha is to save the people and to give them peace.

When Sontoku was sixteen, his mother fell ill and grew daily worse. Sontoku was greatly distressed, and prayed to heaven and earth to find a cure. He never removed his clothes, but stayed by the bedside night and day, doing all he could to relieve his mother's suffering, but without avail. After about ten days' illness, she died.

So great was the boy's grief he was nearly ill himself. Nothing was left to him but an empty house; their fields, and even their furniture, had passed into other hands. He embraced his two brothers and wept in silence, not knowing what to do.

Their relatives held a consultation, and decided that the three children must be cared for, as they would starve if left to themselves. A near relation named Manbei took Sontoku into his house, while another, Kawakubo, of Besho village, received the two younger boys.

CHAPTER II

SONTOKU—AN ORPHAN

THUS the orphaned Sontoku went to live with his relative Manbei at the age of sixteen. This man was both parsimonious and hard-hearted, so the boy's life was still filled with hardship.

One night, after working in the house all day for his guardian, Sontoku sat up to study instead of going to bed. When Manbei noticed this he was very angry and rebuked the boy severely.

"What is this?" he cried. "I have to bear all the expense of bringing you up, yet you must add to it by burning my oil for your midnight study. Do you think I am repaid my outlay by the work of a youngster like you? Ungrateful boy! Besides, of what use can learning be to you, dependent as you are on the charity of others, with no property, no house, no land? Stop that nonsense at once."

Weeping, Sontoku acknowledged his fault and begged his uncle's pardon. Raising his eyes to heaven he lamented his lot:

"Unhappy that I am! Both my parents are gone and I am too young to face the world alone; I must spend my days in dependence on others. Yet if I do not study reading and writing I shall live in ignorance all my life, and how can I then hope to recover the estate handed down by my forefathers? I must study at my own expense so as not to rouse my uncle's anger."

With this purpose in view he cultivated some barren soil by the side of the river and sowed it with rape seed. In due course this yielded him several quarts of seed, to his great delight; and selling his little crop in the town he was able to buy some oil.

Having thus provided his own light he resumed his night studies. But still Manbei was dissatisfied.

"If you work at night with oil bought with your own money it does not affect my expenses, it is true; but of what possible use can learning be to you? Instead of doing unprofitable things you should make rope

at night, and so help to pay for your keep."

So from that time, when night fell, Sontoku always plaited straw rope, and wove it into mats. But at midnight, when the household was asleep, he secretly got out his own oil, and screening the light with his coat so that it would not shine through the paper-covered partition, he studied reading and writing till dawn.

By day he went to the mountain to gather fuel, or to the field to till the ground, or sometimes to the river, to assist in mending and strengthening the banks. Always he worked to the limit of his power; and when he received wages he deposited the money with the headman of the village. When his savings amounted to a certain sum he would visit the poor and helpless people of the village, and distribute the money among them, to relieve their sufferings for a time. He never used the money for himself, but found in this charity the sole pleasure of his hard life.

One year a flood destroyed the irrigation reservoir of the village and converted it into

a field of stony and useless ground. This was Sontoku's opportunity. He spent his holidays in painstaking cultivation of this unpromising plot of waste land, and planted it with young rice shoots thrown away or dropped by the farmers as they transplanted their crop. Carefully tending his new field in spare hours he had at last the satisfaction of harvesting more than a bag of rice.

"To gather little by little," said he, full of joy and hope, "is the way to make a fortune. I am sure now that I shall one day be able to restore the house of my fathers, and by so doing to please their spirits."

With this one bag of rice for seed he set to work with renewed zeal, and devised new plans to increase his crops. Year by year his harvest grew, till at length he found himself independent of the grudging help of his uncle. Thanking him for his kindness in keeping him for such a long time, he asked permission to return to his own village to restore his father's house—a request gladly granted by Manbei.

The old house, empty and neglected all these years, was sadly damaged by the hand

of time and covered with creepers and wild grass. Eagerly the young man set to work to repair it, and here he lived alone for some time, labouring day and night. Slowly he amassed a little money, till at last, after ten thousand hardships, he was able to buy back his father's fields, and as he watched the smoke rise from the ancestral hearth and float above the restored homestead, it seemed a cloud of holiest incense rising in thankfulness and praise to the revered spirits of his forefathers.

CHAPTER III

HELPING THE HATTORI FAMILY

SONTOKU'S relatives were now constantly urging him to take a wife. For several years he refused, but finally married the daughter of a farmer in the next village.

At this time the chief retainer to the *Daimyo*[1] of Odawara was one Hattori Jurobei, a man of very old family and of high rank, who commanded the respect of the whole community. Though possessed of an hereditary income of about 1300 *koku*[2] of rice, he had allowed his circumstances to become so involved that he found himself over 1000 *ryo* in debt, and unable even to pay the interest. Having made every endeavour to extricate himself from his difficulties without success, he had at length determined to resign his official position on account of his poverty.

[1] The title applied to the chief of the clan in Feudal Japan.
[2] About 6000 bushels.

Then a friend told him the story of Sontoku.

"Kinjiro of Kayama-mura," said he, "was born of an extremely poor family. He lost his parents early, all the household possessions became the property of others, and it was only with the help of a relative that he was able to grow to manhood. He bore thousands of difficulties and ten thousand hardships, yet from one bag of rice seed which he procured he at last restored his ruined house.

"Now this man has a remarkable nature, quite beyond the attainment of ordinary men. From his childhood he has had the greatest sympathy with all poor people and has borne countless hardships for the sake of others. Go and ask his assistance. Treat him with respect and trust him utterly. He will certainly be moved by your confidence in him, and by his marvellous ability will restore your fortunes as he did his own."

Greatly pleased with the information, Hattori sent a man to Sontoku and begged him to undertake the rehabilitation of his fortunes.

Sontoku declined, saying, "This is no light task you ask of me. It is true that I have restored my own house, but I am a farmer, and

have accomplished this merely by performing well a farmer's duties. Mr. Hattori's income is the largest in the whole clan, yet he has fallen into necessitous circumstances, and gotten deeply into debt because he has forsaken the true way for a *samurai* to govern his household. How should I, a farmer, know how to direct the affairs of a *samurai?* Pray excuse me to your master."

When Mr. Hattori, more than ever convinced of Sontoku's wisdom, repeated his request more and more urgently, Sontoku was at length shaken in his resolution. "Mr. Hattori," he reflected, "is the chief retainer of our lord of Odawara, and now because of his poverty he is going to resign his office. For the final fate of his house he depends upon me alone. If I do not come to his assistance his family will be ruined and our lord will be greatly grieved. For the sake of the clan I must save him."

Having thus determined, he said to his wife, "Mr. Hattori's appeals are so urgent that I have decided to go to his house and do what I can for him. I am very sorry to give you trouble, but you will have to look

after our affairs while I am away. In five years I will put his difficulties aright and then I shall return home."

His wife wept, but replied that she would do as he wished.

Thereupon Sontoku went to the *samurai* and said, "Your trouble will be cleared away in five years without fail. Provided you trust everything to me, all will be right; but if you interfere with me ever so little I shall not be able to accomplish my task. Unless you consent to give me an absolutely free hand I cannot undertake it."

Mr. Hattori was delighted. "Why should I interfere?" he asked. "I, in my folly, have been unable to look after my affairs properly and have brought ruin on myself. I have tried all means to repair the disaster, but in vain. I can do nothing more, so I have come to you. Upon you alone the future of my house depends; restore it by whatever means you think best."

Then said Sontoku, "You have a debt of 1000 *ryo* or more, while your income is a little over 1000 *koku;* this means that the revenue, though yours in name, really belongs

to others, but being chief retainer to the Daimyo, you abuse your power and do not pay your debt, using this revenue as though it were still your own. Is that not disgraceful? Always to keep in mind the great kindness of your lord, to keep your house properly, and to live economically that you may be able to serve him loyally and repay his benevolence—this is the duty of a retainer. You, however, have been living in luxury and ease, and when you found a deficiency, instead of trying to make it good by economising, you filled the breach by borrowing from others. In consequence, your debt, with interest unpaid, has continually doubled itself, until it is ruining your house. You have proved yourself unworthy of your lord's benevolence. How can you think yourself a loyal retainer?"

Hattori bowed himself to the ground and expressed his repentance.

"You recognise your fault," continued Sontoku; "you must now retrieve it. If your repentance is sincere, practise self-denial. For your meals eat rice gruel only. Let your clothing be of cotton. Never indulge in any-

thing beyond absolute necessities. Will you follow these three rules?"

"Willingly," replied the *samurai*. "If my house can be restored by these means I shall consider myself most fortunate."

Sontoku then summoned all the servants and said to them: "Your master, as you well know, is burdened with a debt of over 1000 *ryo*, which has brought him to poverty. If this state of things continues for a few years longer this house will be ruined. If any of you can suggest a plan for restoring him to prosperity, please let me hear it."

"We are but servants," was the response, "we have no plan. We beg you to devise one."

"Very well," returned Sontoku; "you are all anxious for your master's welfare and you leave the matter in my hands. For a period of five years, then, your master will never give you an order. For that time he has entrusted everything to me. You must obey all my commands and not interfere with me in any way. Are you all willing to work with me for your master's welfare? If any of you are not, let them leave his employ at once."

The servants all replied, "We have long been in the service of our present master, and we should not like to leave him when his affairs are in a critical condition. You are going to take much trouble to restore his house, so we will gratefully obey all your commands."

Sontoku commended the servants' loyalty, and having thus established his position in the household he proceeded to draw up a schedule for the year's outlay, eliminating all expenses not absolutely necessary. Then he called together all the creditors, and acquainting them with the circumstances, promised to pay them in full within five years.

Whenever Mr. Hattori went out he accompanied him as his squire, and when at home he assisted the servants about the house. Every night he instructed the *samurai* in the art of managing a household and of ruling a clan.

Gradually, under his management, the debt decreased, until not only was the whole paid off within the five years as he had promised, but a balance of 300 *ryo* remained,

to the indescribable joy of the whole household.

As he handed over the money to Mr. Hattori and his wife, Sontoku said, "It is now five years since I yielded to your appeal for help. From that time to the present I have striven hard, day and night, to accomplish my task, and it is owing to your firm faith in me that I have been able to extricate you from your difficulties and to pay off the accumulated debt, with something to the good. Now of this 300 *ryo*, please keep 100 in hand to be devoted to the service of our lord in case of any emergency. Another 100 please give to your wife, who has borne so many hardships and worked so strenuously for the restoration of your house; and will she please put it aside as a reserve fund to guard against any return of misfortune. As for the remaining 100 *ryo*, please use that for any purpose you wish."

Mr. Hattori, filled with admiration for the young man, addressed him as follows: "My house was on the brink of ruin, but it has been saved entirely by your efforts. How can I ever thank you? This 300 *ryo* is not

mine, seeing that it is wholly the result of your labours. I should like to give it all to you as a token of gratitude, but as you have already asked us to keep 200 *ryo* against possible contingencies, we shall follow your behest; the remaining 100 *ryo*, however, we beg you to accept as a help toward your own household expenses. If you had stayed at home and worked, you would have made a large fortune by now, but instead you have ungrudgingly laid aside your own work for five years to save me from ruin. This small sum is far from being enough to repay you."

Sontoku was greatly pleased and said, "As you wish me to have the money I accept it gratefully, without hesitation. And now, although your past difficulties are all cleared away, if you make no plans for the future you may find yourself in trouble again. With this thought in mind I have prepared a plan for you. Henceforth you should limit your annual expenditure to 1000 *koku* and lay aside 300 *koku* to be used in the service of your lord, or in case of need. Then, so long as your family exists, you will not only be

able to serve your lord, but you will also escape the danger of a repetition of your recent experience. So pray follow this rule."

After saying this he retired, and having called the servants together said to them:

"When your master's house was in danger I was entrusted with the task of restoring it. During the past five years you have all kept your promise and have uncomplainingly borne the hardships imposed upon us all. I cannot praise you too highly for your loyal and faithful service. The debt of 1000 *ryo* has all been cleared away, and I have now 100 *ryo* left which your master gave me in recognition of my poor efforts. I could not refuse his kind offer, but the work I have done during the past five years was not for my own sake, so why should I accept any recompense for myself? I will distribute this money among you as a reward for your labour and constancy. I am not really giving you this myself; it is a present from your master, so I hope you will accept it cordially."

So saying he divided the 100 *ryo* among the servants, who were equally surprised and delighted. All felt the kindness of their

master and were much moved by the unselfish generosity of Sontoku.

Thus Sontoku, having bidden farewell to Mr. Hattori, returned to his home without being enriched by a single present.

CHAPTER IV

SONTOKU MEETS WITH LORD OKUBO

Lord Okubo, the Daimyo of Odawara, was at that time Chief Adviser to the Shogun.[1] A man of high aims and of great ability, he devoted all his energies to the betterment of his country, trying to reform all bad customs and to promote the peace and prosperity of the people. Hearing an account of Sontoku, the hidden sage, he conceived so great an admiration for him that he wished to appoint him to a high position in the government of his province and secure the benefit of his counsel in furthering the welfare of the people. With this in view he consulted his retainers.

At that period class prejudice was very strong in Japan. People were esteemed less for their attainments than for their rank. The higher officials looked upon the lower as their

[1] The supreme military authority and virtual ruler of Japan, an office held by the Tokugawa family from 1603 till the restoration of the Mikado in 1868.

servants, and a courtier of high rank, though a fool, was respected by the public, while a retainer of low degree, though clever and good, was little regarded. Accordingly the opinion prevailed among Lord Okubo's retainers that it would be injudicious to place a farmer in a high position, over the heads of men of good birth and high degree, and to entrust him with the government of the clan. This would be quite contrary to custom, and however wise this Ninomiya might be, if the other retainers refused to obey him nothing but misfortune could result.

Thus compelled to yield to the prejudice of the times, much to his regret, the Daimyo cast about in his mind to find some way to accomplish his object. "Although the Spirit of the Age," thought he, "judges a man by his position and not by his worth, yet men cannot entirely ignore proved merit, which perforce commands their respect. Now if I order Ninomiya to do something which is beyond the power of my present retainers, he will certainly accomplish it and by this means overcome the prejudice of these men. After that, I may entrust him with the government of the clan, and surely

no one can complain. This seems a very roundabout way of securing his services, but at least I should succeed."

Now there was a relative of Lord Okubo's, a vassal of the Shogun, named Utsu, whose estate, comprising the three villages of Monoi, Yokota, and Higashinuma, in the county of Haga, Shimozuke Province, nominally yielded him an income of 4000 *koku* of rice. The soil, however, was very poor, and the inhabitants idle, lawless, and corrupt. They quarrelled over small gains, and fights were of frequent occurrence. Their number, too, had gradually dwindled, so that where 450 houses were enumerated at the commencement of Genroku (1688), the era of Bunsei (1818–1830) found only 150. All were in extreme poverty, and the fields were so neglected that they were overrun with weeds, and foxes and badgers made their homes in the very houses. In consequence of this state of things the revenue of the estate had fallen from 4000 *koku* to a bare 800, and Utsu and his family were reduced to great straits.

Lord Okubo was deeply concerned over the unfortunate condition of his relative's estate.

He wanted to teach the people to be industrious and at the same time to restrain their lawlessness. Again and again he had selected able men from among his retainers and entrusted them with the work of restoring the place, giving them several thousand pieces of gold to enable them to accomplish this object; but when they got to their domain they were deceived by the cunning of the villagers, or they exercised their power imprudently, so that some of them were punished by their lord and others ran away, till at length not one of the retainers could be induced to undertake the difficult task.

The Daimyo was greatly grieved at the repeated failures, and, satisfied that no ordinary man could successfully effect the restoration, he determined to enlist the aid of Sontoku. "His marvellous genius," thought he, "will be sure to succeed, and when he has restored this refractory district to peace and prosperity, while my retainers dare not even make the attempt, then his superlative wisdom will be beyond dispute, and who can possibly object if I entrust to him the government of Odawara?"

Having thus determined, he issued an order committing to Ninomiya the duty of restoring the three villages. But Sontoku refused to undertake it, saying, "How can so humble a man as I accomplish so great a work? I was born in a farmer's house and grew up amid the poorest circumstances. By tilling the soil to the best of my ability the virtue of my ancestors enabled me to restore my father's house; but what do I know of the great work of governing a district? Though my lord's commands require obedience, yet the sense of my own incapacity compels me to decline."

When the messenger returned with this answer, Lord Okubo was more firmly persuaded of Sontoku's greatness, and he sent again, repeating his request in still more polite form. But Sontoku again refused, and for three years he resisted Lord Okubo's importunity, till at length his modesty and diffidence were overcome and he gave a qualified consent.

"For three years," said he, "my lord has never ceased to urge this task upon me until I can no longer refuse. But first I should

like to visit the place, to study the land and the people, and try to discover the cause of their adversity; then I can decide whether I shall be able to accept the trust or not."

Lord Okubo was greatly pleased, and gave orders for him to visit the land; so in the fourth year of Bunsei (1820) Sontoku left Odawara and went to Sakuramachi of Shimozuke. He visited every house and studied the circumstances of the people; he went into the fields to see the quality of the soil, and observed the work of the farmers and how they irrigated their land. He made inquiries into the past as well as the present condition of the people, and in the course of two months had obtained a clear understanding of the state of affairs and of the causes of the district's decline.

Returning to Odawara he reported to the Daimyo as follows:

"My lord, in spite of my stupidity you have asked me to restore the estate of the Utsu family, and though I refused on account of my incapacity, yet you would not excuse me. Accordingly I have visited the estate and have studied the land and the people.

The land is very poor and the people are both lazy and lawless; but if you rouse them by means of benevolence, reform their bad old customs, and induce them to work hard on their farms, then there is hope of restoration. If a benevolent administration is not put into practice their poverty will remain even though you excuse the whole tax of 4000 *koku* of rice every year. Compare the districts of Sugamo and Nihonbashi in Yedo.[1] The land of Nihonbashi is much sought after, although the rents are so high, because the tenants can get a large profit from their business, while in Sugamo people do not want the land at any price because profits are so small that no one can make any money. Though the tax on good land is high yet people living on it prosper because their profits are large, while on poor land, though the tax is low, the people remain in poverty because their profits are so small.

"To make the inhabitants of a poor district prosperous is only possible by the most bene-

[1] The old name for the city of Tokyo. It was the Shogun's capital, and therefore the real seat of government, and then, as now, the largest city in Japan.

volent administration. A hot spring remains hot all the year round without attention, but a bath is kept hot only by constant care, and when the fire is not fed with fuel soon becomes cold again. Good land is like a hot spring and poor land like a bath, since it prospers only under careful government, and when this fails, its prosperity declines. The way to restore these poor villages then is simply this: to be deeply benevolent, removing all difficulties; to reform lawlessness with kindly treatment; and to teach the people how best to use their land that it may be brought to its utmost value.

"If you try to restore the place with money, I cannot estimate how many thousand pieces of gold it will cost. In the past, when my lord has ordered any one to restore the villages he gave him a great deal of money for the purpose, and this was the reason for the continual failure. In future let not a single gold piece be given to the administrator."

"Your arguments seem quite reasonable," returned Lord Okubo; "but if my governors could not effect the restoration with plenty of

money how will it be possible to accomplish it without any?"

"If your administrator," replied Sontoku, "is provided with funds, the people will all set their hearts on getting the money. The villagers will doubt the honesty of the local officials, and the officials will find fault with the people, and in this mutual distrust and contention the work of restoration will fail, and the state of affairs become worse than ever. This is all caused by the money."

"True enough," said the Daimyo; "but what can you do without money?"

"To cultivate wild land," replied Sontoku, "you must utilise the strength it possesses; so, to cure poverty you must use the strength of poverty."

"And how can you utilise the strength of wild land?"

"Suppose we get one *koku* of rice from the cultivation of a *tan*[1] of barren land. We can use half of this for food and the remainder will sow a larger area of the wild land for the next harvest. If we repeat this year by year, we can in time cultivate and reclaim any

[1] About one-fourth of an acre.

quantity of wild land. From the foundation of our country no money has been borrowed for the purpose of cultivating the soil—all our progress has come from utilising the land's own strength, beginning from nothing. So what difficulty will there be in developing this barren land of yours, if we simply follow the good old methods of our forefathers ?

"Though the income of the Utsu family is accounted at 4000 *koku*, it is really but 800. Let the income then be settled at 800 *koku* until the restoration is complete. If we put up with a certain amount of distress during the hard times and zealously follow the ancient ways of farming, we shall be able to restore the land to prosperity and peace without needing any funds; and if you entrust this task to me I will undertake to bring it to a successful issue in the space of ten years.

"Yet there is one difficulty which it is beyond my power to overcome. The land is so poor that even when it is all cultivated to the fullest extent possible it will not yield its owner more than half of its supposed value, and should he claim the full rental of 4000 *koku* all our work will be wasted and the

populace will again be ruined, precisely as happened in the first instance. So if the Utsu family intend to demand their 4000 *koku* in the future it would be folly to spend our time and energy now for no ultimate good. You had better, in that case, bestow on the family some other estate which is really worth that amount."

"What you say is quite true," admitted the Daimyo, "and it would not be difficult to give them a richer estate; but I do not wish to leave this place desolate, so I now charge you to restore it. I give you an absolutely free hand; make whatever arrangements you may think best. As to the deficiency of half the revenue, do not let that trouble you. I will make it up to Utsu after the restoration is complete.

"Now please go to these villages, take good care of your health, and for your country's sake restore the villages to peace and prosperity, and in so doing you will remove my anxiety."

And Sontoku accepted the responsibility.

CHAPTER V

GREAT SELF-SACRIFICE

On receiving this appointment from the lord of Odawara, Sontoku thought to himself:

"The villages of Sakuramachi are almost wholly ruined, and the people are corrupt and crafty, so that even wise men have failed to reform them. But if I do this work with sincerity, dedicating my life to it wholly, there is no reason why I should not succeed.

"But there is another point to be considered. I was born of an extremely poor family and was early left an orphan, yet I was able, afterward, to gratify the spirits of my ancestors by restoring our ruined house. Then somehow my lord heard of me, and gave me this unexpected task of restoring the Utsu estate. So now, if I wish to be loyal to my lord, I must prove unfilial by neglecting my own house, while if I perform my filial duty I shall have to be disloyal to my lord.

Alas, how often have men found it impossible to reconcile these two obligations!"

Smiting his breast, he remained for some time in deep thought, then suddenly exclaimed:

"Why should I be troubled! Loyalty and filial piety are not really two, but one. There is loyalty in perfect filial piety and piety in true loyalty. Though I should make my house prosperous even to the amassing of a hundred millions, and worship the ancestral spirits with all the proper rites, yet they will not count me filial if I neglect my duty to my lord. But if I relieve the sufferings of a thousand people and bring peace to the mind of my lord, then surely my ancestors will be well pleased, even though our own house be ruined."

His mind being thus at ease, he went to the tombs of his ancestors and kneeling down told them of his decision. Then he went home and said to his wife:

"I have accepted the Daimyo's charge, as I felt it was my duty to do so; but it is a great work, which cannot be accomplished by ordinary means. I must abandon utterly my

own house and dedicate myself entirely to this work. As for yourself, if you are willing to share with me all manner of difficulties and distress in fulfilling our lord's commands, come with me to Shimozuke; but if you shrink from the hardships you must undergo, then you may leave me and return to your father's house."

"What do you mean?" returned his wife. "When a woman marries she returns no more to her father's home. When I left my parents my mind was already made up to share the life of my husband. If he goes through fire and water, there will I go too. As for this command of our lord, you go to do a great work, and I shall count myself fortunate to be able to help in it. I also will dedicate myself to that, and gladly shall I bear all kinds of hardship. So be assured, I will go with you to Shimozuke."

Well pleased with his wife's decision, Sontoku proceeded to dispose of his farms, his house, and his furniture, and in the fifth year of Bunsei (1821), with his wife and only child, Yotaro, a boy of three, he left his old home for ever.

The journey to Sakuramachi, a distance of

150 miles, occupied several days. On the last day of the journey he was met, when still about three miles from Monoi-mura, by the headmen of that and other villages. They bowed low before him, and with every show of pleasure at seeing him, addressed him in humble tones:

"We have heard that the lord of Odawara has sent you to look after the welfare of our villages, and we villagers greet you with as much delight as children welcoming their parents after an absence from home. We have been waiting here for you several days, and our only wish is to deserve your favour. You must feel weary after your long journey, so we beg you to accept the wine and other refreshments we have prepared for you."

Sontoku appeared pleased with the reception, but he only said, "You are really too kind. I am come to this place because, notwithstanding my lack of ability, I could not disobey my lord's commands. I am now anxious to reach Sakuramachi as quickly as possible, however, so please do not put yourselves to any trouble on my account." And he pushed on at once to the town.

Being asked subsequently why he had thus slightingly treated the headmen, when they had come out to meet him so courteously, thoughtfully proffering him entertainment after his tiring journey, Sontoku replied:

"Those who come forward first to flatter are cunning and selfish people. Honest and sincere persons are not so eager to put themselves forward, even when wanted. These men deceive and flatter their superiors while they rob and maltreat those beneath them. Hearing of my arrival, and being afraid lest their bad practices should be discovered, they pretend devotion while in secret they propose to carry out their own dishonest schemes. All the retainers hitherto sent here were deceived by their flattery and cunning, and mistaking them for good men, consulted them about everything from the beginning, and this was the reason that all their labours were rendered vain; the wicked prospered and the good were dissatisfied. So how could they hope to effect the restoration that was expected of them?

"I did not judge the headmen by their appearance, but read what was in their hearts.

I will not fall a victim to their shrewd devices, but will seek out the really good men, to help them and all such as are in need of my assistance and are incapable of looking after themselves."

CHAPTER VI

BATTLE WITH DIFFICULTIES IN SAKURAMACHI

Sakuramachi had originally been a fief of the Daimyo of Odawara, but long before, the three villages which it comprised had been given to the Utsu family. The Sakuramachi Council House was built under Lord Okubo, and now the roof was broken, the posts were rotting, and the walls falling in; grass grew on the floors and wild animals lived within it. This was an index to the general condition of the villages. Two-thirds of the farms were a wilderness—only the fields immediately adjoining such houses as were still inhabited showed signs of cultivation, and even there, because of the people's idleness, the crops were choked with weeds and bamboo grass.

Sontoku's first act was to repair the Council House, and here he took up his abode. Then he drew up a detailed plan for his campaign of restoration. Every day from dawn till

sunset he walked about, visiting one house after another, and studying the characters and the circumstances of the inhabitants. He examined the boundaries of the fields, measured the waste places, and noted the qualities of the land and the convenience of the water supply. In the fierce heat of summer, in the severe cold of winter, in rain and snow, he never ceased his rounds of investigation, till he knew every inch of ground.

He praised the diligent, helped the needy, and taught the backward and the erring. He made improvements in the irrigation system, gave instruction in the methods of farming, himself helped in the cultivation of waste places, and in every way sought to bring prosperity and peace. He endured all kinds of hardship, living in every way like the poorest of the people. His clothes were cotton of the cheapest kind, and never renewed until completely worn out. For food he took nothing but rice and a bowl of soup, and when abroad only cold rice and water, with a little *miso*.[1] When offered food by any of the villagers, he invariably declined, saying, "Your community is in poor

[1] A preparation of bean and wheat flour salted.

circumstances because of your past laziness, and I will not take any better fare nor wear better clothes until you are all able to do the same."

All day long Sontoku worked in the fields or in the homes of the people, returning home late at night; then after only two hours' sleep he would rise and begin his arrangements for the new day. He observed the strictest routine, so that his tasks were performed with the speed and smoothness of falling water, to the great astonishment of the indolent villagers. Instances of the hard tasks he accomplished and the privations he endured are numberless, and the sincerity of his efforts was such as would move heaven and earth and win the response of the gods themselves.

It has been true from ancient times that the narrow-minded cannot see into the future, so they quarrel over present losses and envy the good fortune of their neighbours, harass others in well-doing, and seek profit in evil. So the crafty and wicked villagers outwardly obeyed Sontoku's instructions but secretly did all they could to hinder his plans. Whenever he tried to effect a certain purpose they placed

obstructions in his way, or they incited ignorant persons to destroy his work. When he tried to cultivate the waste lands they would endeavour to prevent it by saying they had already as much land under cultivation as they could possibly keep up. When he invited farmers from other parts, giving them land, and providing implements and other necessaries, so that they might settle there, these selfish men would insult and persecute the newcomers till they could remain in the place no longer. When Sontoku wished to rectify the boundaries of the fields they would hide the deeds and records and say that they were lost, thus making it impossible to correct the boundaries.

The strong preyed upon the weak; the rich confiscated good fields on account of small debts unpaid and so brought utter ruin on their poorer neighbours. The same people secretly cultivated waste and unclaimed lands, harvesting the crops in secret so as to escape the payment of taxes, while their own lands they left unfertilised, and blamed the poverty of the soil for the bad crops, asserting that they would be ruined if their taxes were not reduced. The headmen complained of the

lawlessness of the people and the people complained of the injustice of the headmen; the crafty induced the ignorant to lodge all manner of appeals in the village courts, with the idea that Sontoku would be so occupied with these judicial matters that he would have neither time nor energy for his work of reform.

But Sontoku held his court at daybreak, when he heard and settled their grievances; he gave the people instruction at night, and continued with his labours during the day. He investigated the causes of their disputes, and he encouraged the good and admonished the evil-doers, showing them clearly the right and the wrong, but without inflicting punishment of any kind. The result of his methods was that the number of appeals to the court soon became very small indeed.

Now the lord of Odawara was afraid of taxing Sontoku's strength too far, and knowing what a vast number of matters had to be attended to, he ordered certain of his retainers to go to Shimozuke to assist Sontoku. The Utsu family, too, sent one Shuhei Yokoyama to help him. This man was upright and learned, and a sincere believer in Son-

toku's methods, so he gave himself gladly to the work. But he was extremely delicate, and lived only a few years after coming to Sakuramachi.

One of the retainers sent by Lord Okubo proved to be a knave. He hated Sontoku for his virtue and did all he could to frustrate his efforts. All Sontoku's proposals he opposed with specious arguments, and going about in the villages he countermanded Sontoku's orders, and threatened to punish all who failed to obey himself. The villagers were afraid of him, so his commands were followed. Sontoku's crafty enemies were quick to take advantage of the situation, and, flattering this evil counsellor, helped him to undo the work of reform; so he slighted the good members of the community and favoured the wicked, opposing Sontoku, and often, when in liquor, ridiculing him and his labours.

Sontoku was greatly grieved, and sought to overcome his opposition, sometimes gently remonstrating and endeavouring to show him the way of righteousness; but all in vain —the retainer went from bad to worse.

"I cannot do anything to this man," sighed

Sontoku, "on account of his rank. But for that, it would not be difficult to manage him; but because his rank is higher than mine he looks down on me, and is able to command the obedience of the people and to thwart my plans. If I spend all my time trying to convert him to my side my work will suffer. So there is nothing for it but to beguile him."

Then he said to his wife, "This man is abnormally fond of *sake*, so every morning when he rises take him some good hot *sake* and refreshments, and ask him to partake of them, as he has exhausted himself with the worries of his office ever since his arrival here. Tell him that I have told you to entertain him. Then ply him with liquor and good things, to keep him at the table all day long. As this seems the only way in which I can accomplish my work, please do your part thoroughly."

Sontoku's wife did as directed, giving the retainer the best *sake* and dainty food. He was delighted, and spent the day feasting. Next day she prepared the same refreshments, and day after day the man devoted his whole

time to the delicacies offered him, and quite gave up his visits among the villagers. The mischief-makers frequently came to see him, but he was always too drunk to consult with them over their plots.

Sontoku continued to labour in the villages, helping the poor, cultivating the waste places, and in every way furthering the work of restoration by night as well as by day. And at length the hostile retainer, seeing all that Sontoku had accomplished, was seized with shame, and repenting of his former wickedness devoted himself earnestly to the cause of reform, greatly to the assistance of Sontoku.

CHAPTER VII

MEETING FALSE CHARGES

When Sontoku began his work he drew up a programme of expenditure for the Utsu family, fixing their income at 1000 *koku* a year for the period of restoration. Having advised Lord Okubo to give no money towards the work of restoration, he used the proceeds of the sale of his own property, and followed the good old method of commencing with very little and developing that by means of its own natural increase.

In order to swell the population of his villages he invited people to come from other localities, and these immigrants he treated very kindly. When critics objected that it was not right to treat strangers as kindly as one's own children, he replied:

"Between parents and children there is a natural affection which does not exist between strangers, hence these newcomers will remain

or will leave again just according to the amount of kindness they receive at our hands. Besides, they include many wandering spirits who have left their native villages, and whom we must treat with double kindness—more even than we bestow on our own children—if we would win them to stay with us."

From this reply we can gather how well newcomers were treated by Sontoku, and if he was so kind to them, how much more so was he to the natives of the villages. Whenever any were on the point of giving up their homes on account of extreme poverty, Sontoku would give them land, houses, or rice, farming implements or clothing, or would remit their taxes or pay their debts—whatever seemed best to enable them to live and to keep up their houses.

In some cases, however, the more he helped them the more their difficulties increased—instead of rising out of their poverty they sank into deeper distress. These individuals caused Sontoku much concern.

"Dead trees," said he, "can never blossom, no matter how much we may manure them, while young trees under cultivation grow more

quickly. The fall of the wicked is approaching because of their increasing lawlessness. If we make life easier for them we shall only hasten their ruin and so, in reality, prove unkind. If by instruction we can first change their hearts and then, having seen them begin to shake off their bad habits, if we give them help, it will be like manuring a new tree and will prove a lasting benefit unmixed with evil; but for those who persist in their evil courses and will not reform in spite of good counsel—they are beyond saving; we can but wait till their downfall is accomplished and then choose some good relative to succeed them. These also will be new trees, and the manure of kindness will be sure to prosper them."

He now studied more carefully the character of the needy before giving them financial aid. He instructed them earnestly, and if they showed signs of reformation he assisted them; but those who did not try to amend their bad habits received no help, however poor they might be.

Some of the retainers who came from Odawara protested strongly that *all* the poor

must be given charity in order to restore the villages successfully and carry out his scheme of benevolent government; but Sontoku replied that they would do more harm than good by gifts to the undeserving poor. The retainers could not understand his far-seeing policy, and becoming more and more displeased with his methods, publicly asserted that he was sinking the villages into deeper distress instead of restoring them. Naturally, too, the poor were dissatisfied at not receiving immediate aid.

At this juncture three of the retainers secretly wrote to the authorities at Odawara stating that Sontoku was treating the people unkindly, with other charges equally unjust. Lord Okubo therefore summoned Sontoku to Odawara in order to determine what truth there was in the charges. Thither Sontoku at once repaired, and in answer to the Daimyo's questions said:

"Since my arrival at Sakuramachi I have been working as hard as possible with the one desire to do my duty well and save the people. It is most unfortunate, not for me alone but for you as well, that these charges have been made when my work is but half

done. I have no wish to condemn others nor even to justify myself; so I beg you to release me from my post and put in my place your retainers who find fault with me. If they can restore the villages I shall be well content, seeing that that is the sole object of my labours."

At this response Lord Okubo at once felt assured that Sontoku was perfectly loyal and that the accusations were unjust; so he thanked him for his long and arduous service, and added:

"I have not the least doubt of your trustworthiness. Your great ideas are beyond the power of ordinary men to fathom, so they misjudge you and falsely accuse you. I will punish them for their slanders."

"But," said Sontoku, "they have done nothing wicked. From their point of view these charges were not false, for, not comprehending my scheme, they were truly afraid I might do harm to the people; so their intentions were in reality most loyal. That is why I refused, just now, to defend myself by accusing them. If you punish them I shall feel myself to blame, and will resign

my position. Rather comfort and encourage them in their zeal ; let them continue in their present work, and sooner or later they must come to understand my designs."

The Daimyo was greatly pleased with Sontoku's conduct, and addressing his accusers, said :

"How can your shallow minds comprehend the depth of Ninomiya's wisdom? To bring charges against him is very wrong, and you should be punished but that Ninomiya, so far from making counter-charges against you, has spoken in your behalf, and asked me to let you work with him still, until the reforms are accomplished. Accordingly, I will excuse you this time, but if you act in this way again I shall certainly punish you."

The three retainers trembled with fear, but they were much moved by Sontoku's generosity, and from that time helped him whole-heartedly.

CHAPTER VIII

FASTING AT NARITA

The incident related in the previous chapter caused Sontoku much grief. "It is now several years," he thought, "since I came here, and I have never ceased to labour to bring peace and prosperity to these people, but I am thwarted by the plots of crafty enemies, and even the retainers who come to help me are prejudiced and suspicious, so that they accuse me to my lord. There is no doubt that my plan must ultimately be successful, but with so much opposition, both open and secret, I cannot tell how long it may take me to accomplish my task. How easy it would be to confess my defeat and resign my post, but alas! that would be to prove myself unfaithful to my lord's commands. I fear the cause of my trouble is that I am not sincere enough. To the truly sincere mind nothing is impossible."

With this thought in mind he left the Council House and went secretly to Mount Narita,[1] where he fasted for twenty-one days. He prayed that his lord's desire might be fulfilled and the people saved. Several times each day he bathed in cold water to purify his body, and he continued in prayer day and night. On the twenty-first day, the day on which his prayer should be answered, it is said that he received a sign to signify that his desire should be granted because of his sincerity, but Sontoku himself never told any one that such was the case.

After this he broke his fast with rice gruel and then returned to Sakuramachi, walking the whole fifty miles in one day. This feat amazed every one. "Even the strongest man," said they, "could not walk more than a very few miles after a three weeks' fast; how then can one do fifty miles? Surely this is a miracle." From that time the people were convinced of his extraordinary nature. The prejudice of his associates, too, melted away;

[1] A famous Buddhist temple much resorted to by worshippers. The twenty-one days' fast was a common custom of petitioners, and a special building is set apart for their accommodation. This term has since been reduced to seven days.

they learned to esteem him and his methods highly, and ceased to put obstacles in his way, helping him instead, with all their power, so that his reforms now progressed steadily.

When Sontoku went to Narita to fast no one knew where he had gone. His officials and subordinates in the Council House, in great concern, made inquiries for him everywhere, without result. On his arrival at Narita, Sontoku went to an inn and told the people there that he had come to the famous temple to fast and pray. The proprietor, struck by the unusual character of his guest's face, asked him his name and address. Sontoku gave his name and said he was a member of the Odawara clan; then, taking seventy pieces of gold from his purse, he requested the innkeeper to take charge of the money for him. That a man so poor in appearance should have so large a sum in his possession seemed highly suspicious to the proprietor, so he thought best to have nothing to do with him, and begged him to go to another house, saying that his own was full.

"But you accepted me at first," Sontoku protested, "and now you change your mind

and refuse me admittance. Why is that? I am come here simply to fast and pray; why are you suspicious of me?"

Sontoku's voice was like the tones of a great bell and his eyes were so piercing that the manager was afraid, and, apologising for his incivility, took him in. But he felt more uneasy than ever, and secretly sent a messenger to the official house of Lord Okubo at Yedo, to make inquiries as to the character of his guest.

When the officials there heard of Sontoku's visit to Narita, they thought there must be some good reason for it, and they assured the messenger that he belonged to their clan, and that he was a man of importance who must be treated with respect. As Lord Okubo was at that time the Chief Minister to the Shogun and in very high esteem, the innkeeper was quite reassured and treated his guest with every consideration.

Meanwhile, of the messengers sent out from Sakuramachi to seek for news of Sontoku, one at length reached Yedo, and there learnt that Sontoku had gone to Narita to fast and pray. On receiving this report the

Councillors were much concerned, and regretted that they had not pleased him. Fearing that the Daimyo might punish them if they did not get him back, one of them hastened to Narita, and finding Sontoku begged him to return. "All the people," said he, "are grieved at your absence. Pray have compassion on our grief and come back to us, and in future we shall obey you in all things and work for you as hard as we can." As this chanced to be the twenty-first day of his fast, the day of fulfilment of his desire, Sontoku gladly consented, and returned at once to Sakuramachi.

CHAPTER IX

REWARDING A GOOD OLD LABOURER

In Monoi-mura there was a forest of about 150 acres which had been left to run wild for nearly eighty years, till it was beyond the power of the villagers to open it up. Sontoku hired additional labourers from other districts, and cleared away the brambles and undergrowth and felled the timber, so that in the course of a few months the place was quite clear. During these months Sontoku was at the forest every morning before the workmen arrived: he directed them at their labour throughout the day, and waited until the last man was gone in the evening before returning home himself. So well did he manage his men that they moved as his own hands and feet—so when he had fifty labourers they did the work of a hundred, and when he had a hundred they did the work of two hundred, and every one was surprised at the rapidity

with which the work was accomplished. This was due to the fact that Sontoku himself took his share of the hard work, and also to his power to gauge the capabilities of the men, so that he was able to place the best workers in the most responsible positions, and made the less capable ones do their best by putting them in a position suitable to their capacity. He praised the hard workers and exhorted the indolent, directing his men, it was remarked, as great generals direct their soldiers.

There was one among the labourers who worked harder than any of his fellows, perspiring much and taxing his strength to the utmost. One of the retainers from Odawara who was helping Sontoku saw this man and was greatly impressed by his industry, so he drew Sontoku's attention to him, desiring him to reward the fellow with his praise and so incite others to emulate his zeal. Sontoku went two or three times to the spot and watched him toiling industriously, but to the retainer's surprise said not a word of praise. After some time he returned to the place again, when he said sternly to the workman,

"You are working hard only in order to deceive me. When I am by, you work harder than any one else, but when I am away you are idle. There is a limit to human strength, and if you kept up that pace steadily you would break down in a single day. If I am wrong, and you can work at that rate all day, then I shall stay here and see you do it. Will you undertake that?"

Thunderstruck, the crafty fellow prostrated himself at Sontoku's feet, and answered not a word.

Sontoku continued: "The sight of such dishonest work will induce others to copy you, and I will have no one serve me who tries to deceive me. Go at once and work here no more."

The labourer apologised humbly for his offence and begged so hard for mercy that Sontoku forgave him. This incident greatly impressed the people with a sense of Sontoku's great insight.

There was another labourer, an old man of sixty, who employed himself grubbing out the stumps of the felled trees. He worked ceaselessly, and when any one urged him to stop

and take a moment's rest he would smile and say, "Young men can do a full day's work, even if they rest at times; but I am so old and have so little strength left that if I took time to rest I should get nothing done at all."

To a certain retainer who observed him, it seemed that he did only about a third as much work in the day as the other men, and that he spent his time grubbing roots in order to shirk more difficult tasks. The retainer wondered why such a useless old man was kept at all, and he secretly laughed at Sontoku for what he considered his one mistake. At length the labour was ended and the forest cleared away. Sontoku thanked all the men and sent home those he had hired from outside, but this old man he summoned to the Council House to see him, and asked him where he lived.

"I am a farmer of Kasama in Hidachi," the man replied. "My family is very poor, but my son is now grown up, and hearing that you needed labourers I left him to take care of the farm and came here to try and earn a little money. You have been very kind to me, to employ me at the same wages you

paid to young men, instead of sending me away because I am old and feeble."

Then Sontoku handed the old man fifteen pieces of gold, saying that it was a reward for his having worked harder than any one else.

Greatly astonished, the old man respectfully took the money, but immediately returned it, saying:

"You are too kind. I certainly deserve no reward. As I have said, my declining strength could not effect a day's work equal to that of an ordinary strong labourer, yet you gave me full wages; and now, although I have received more than I deserved, you offer me this great reward for nothing! I cannot possibly accept it."

"Do not refuse it," said Sontoku. "I have employed many labourers, and do you think I should give a reward at random, where there was no merit? I have watched you at your work during the past months, though you did not try to attract attention. Most men chose the easiest places to work, so as to make as big a showing as possible in a short time: but you kept steadily to your task of grubbing

roots, work which other men avoided, and you never rested, because you thought your age prevented you from doing your full share, so you could not afford to waste any time. You have rooted out stumps without number, and so helped us to prepare the land much quicker than we should otherwise have been able to do. Now if I do not recognise your unusual industry by giving you a prize, but treat you as I have all the other men, what sort of encouragement would others have to do their best?

"You came here, you say, to try and earn a little money because of your poverty, yet now, when I offer you a well-earned reward, you will not take it! Truly, your honesty is far beyond that of other men. Accept this now as a gift from heaven in merciful recognition of your honesty and sincerity. It will please me to know that you have taken the money to improve your circumstances and to provide for your old age."

The old man was so overcome with joy that the tears rained down his wrinkled cheeks; he bowed low before Sontoku with hands clasped, unable to utter a word of his grateful

thanks. He accepted the gold and set out to share his good fortune with his family at home.

The retainers and the people were now able to appreciate the worth of the old man's character, and they were again much impressed by Sontoku's insight and the manner in which he encouraged the good and sincere.

CHAPTER X

TEACHING A VILLAGE HEADMAN

Of the three villages of Sakuramachi, Yokota was the poorest. Its houses numbered only half of what they had once been, the fields had become a wilderness, and of the remaining inhabitants many were in the last extremity of destitution. Sontoku looked after them with the greatest kindness, doing everything possible to improve their circumstances.

The headman of the village, Enzo by name, was an honest and upright man, though not naturally clever. His family had been head of the village for hundreds of years, but their house had fallen into a state of ruin, and he had long been saving money and gathering materials for the purpose of building a new one. He still lacked 20 *ryo* of the amount required, so he ventured to ask Sontoku to lend him the money.

"Alas!" said Sontoku. "Are you making

plans for the comfort of your household while the dire poverty of your village merits all your concern? Do you think that is right? The duties of a headman are to look after his village, to rule the inhabitants well, teach the erring, admonish the wicked, remonstrate with the idle, help the poor, and comfort the helpless; to see that the people obey the laws and do not fall into bad habits, to make them industrious in their farming, to take care that they pay their taxes promptly and that no grievances go unredressed. Your ancestors have been headmen of this village for many generations, and now its future depends entirely upon you. The people have become thoroughly lazy and are in extremely poor circumstances; some are utterly ruined and many have deserted this their native place; the fields are desolate, half the houses have crumbled to ruins, and the remainder are without means for their upkeep, while your taxes have dwindled so that the Utsu family cannot support themselves on their income. Throughout the large province of Shimozuke there is hardly another village so poor as yours. If all this does not grieve you then you are not fit to hold

the position of headman. If a village is well managed, if the fields are well tilled and the people prosperous, the credit is rightly due to the headman; but when the land is desolate, the people poor, and bad habits prevail, shall not the blame be his also? The owner has been greatly grieved by the sad state of affairs here, and for many years he did all in his power to restore the place, but in vain. At length he appealed to the lord of Odawara for help, and Lord Okubo used every effort to amend your condition, only to see the villagers go from bad to worse. And now, since I came here at my lord's request, I have toiled day and night to bring prosperity to the land and the people, as you very well know. Since the Daimyo is so concerned about the welfare of the place, how is it that the headman shows so little solicitude? Had you been sincere you would have been touched by his lordship's benevolence, and have shown repentance for having neglected the people and allowed your village to reach such a miserable condition. You should have endeavoured to lighten the cares of our lord and to fulfil the true duties of a headman by selling some of your property, practising the utmost

economy, and being the first to bear hardship; and with the money thus saved you should have helped the poor, have cultivated the waste places, and generally have assisted in the restoration of the village.

"And behold, instead, you want to pull down your ancestral home and build a new one for your own personal comfort, and to gratify this selfish desire you wish to borrow money! Is this not adding fault to fault? Could our lord regard you as a loyal subject if he knew of this? And if the villagers knew, would they not think you their enemy and speak spitefully against you? Could you then be happy and content in your new home, however beautiful it might be? Though your house is somewhat dilapidated it is not uninhabitable. Look about you at the houses of your neighbours. There are many which do not keep out the wind and the rain—can you compare these with yours?

"Yet I am glad you have come to me to borrow, for it gives me the opportunity I should not otherwise have had to instruct you. If you feel the truth of my words give up your plan of rebuilding. Imagine that you

have borrowed the 20 *ryo* you ask for, and repay it to me within five years. If you could not repay me this money under ordinary circumstances, without having built your house, then assuredly you could not do so after building. If you borrow money knowing that you cannot pay it back you are cheating; but if it be possible to repay me having built the house then it cannot be difficult to pay me the same sum without building, so, without borrowing the money, try to pay me 20 *ryo* in five years' time. If you do so, even though you cannot help the poor yourself, nor cultivate the waste places, I will do it for you, with your money, and that will be as though you performed these acts in person.

"As it is the duty of a headman to taste hardship himself before his people suffer, so, when they are prosperous, your desire for a new house may very properly be satisfied, and I will see that it shall be. In that case your people cannot feel any enmity towards you, nor will any think you selfish. If you do not take my advice you will soon lose your popularity, people will revile you, and

it will be impossible for you to occupy your house in peace."

Enzo was deeply moved by Sontoku's teaching, and at once stopped the preparations for rebuilding. He worked harder than ever before, and he paid Sontoku the money agreed on in annual instalments with interest as well. Moreover, he cut down many trees on his estate, and selling the timber, sent the proceeds to Sontoku.

Afterwards, when the village was completely restored and the people had become prosperous, every family having a comfortable home, Sontoku built a house, the finest in the three villages, costing over 1000 *ryo*, and gave it to Enzo. The headman was delighted and the villagers were pleased too—for they knew how he had paid the money to Sontoku for their benefit—and no envy was felt. Sontoku then built two more houses which he bestowed on two adult members of Enzo's family, and the joy and gratitude of the headman knew no bounds.

CHAPTER XI

REFORMING A DESPERATE CHARACTER

In Monoi-mura there lived a well-to-do farmer named Kishiyemon—a clever man, of strong character, but parsimonious. From the first he ridiculed Sontoku and tried to keep the people from respecting him. He wasted his time playing the *samisen*[1] and singing ballads, and in every way showed his contempt for Sontoku's instructions to the people. For seven years Sontoku treated him leniently and refrained from admonishing him for his misspent life. Observing that the work of reform was progressing rapidly as the years advanced, and forced to recognise Sontoku's merits as they became more and more apparent, Kishiyemon said to himself one day:

"Many retainers have been sent from Odawara in the past to try and reform this place, but not one of them was able to stay here for a single year—they either resigned the

[1] A musical instrument.

post or misbehaved and ran away. I thought the tale would still hold good with Sontoku, whatever methods he might adopt; but now the results of his work are every day more noticeable, and the restoration of the villages will be an accomplished fact in the near future —so if I spend my days working against him I may soon be punished. I had better apologise for my past faults and help in the work of reform, so as to make myself secure for the future."

Accordingly he sent a man to tell Sontoku that he was impressed by the excellence of the work he was doing, and to ask that he might be allowed to help. Sontoku gladly accepted his offer, with no word of blame for his past hostility, so Kishiyemon went to the Council House and listened to Sontoku's instructions in the general plan of his work and on the right way of life.

Truly impressed by the great truths he had heard, Kishiyemon set himself to work hard every day: but the villagers had no respect for him and would not listen to what he said, much to his disappointment. Seeing this, Sontoku gave him further counsel.

"Although you have repented of your former behaviour," said he, "and are now working hard and earnestly for the public good, the people cannot understand your change of life and accordingly mistrust you. To cease from all selfish desires is very difficult, but unless you can do this the people will not believe in you."

Kishiyemon promised to follow Sontoku's directions, and asked what he must do first in order to rid himself of all selfish desires.

"Give to the poor," replied Sontoku, "all the money you have amassed. Sell your possessions and again give all away. There is no nobler conduct for a man than to give up all desire for self, to give away his fortune for the benefit of the poor, and to give his own strength to the furtherance of a good cause. Your past actions showed no other aim than your own profit and pleasure. To care for one's self alone and take no thought of others is the way of animals. To be born a man and yet to spend one's life as an animal—is that not a terribly sad fate? If now you follow my advice and, forsaking the ways of animals, seek the highest aims

of man, your heart will be cleansed from the stains of selfish desires, and there is no doubt that the people, seeing your deeds, will be touched and will believe in you."

Kishiyemon heard these words with mingled feelings of grief and joy, and he could not at once decide what course to adopt. He desired to follow the path of virtue, yet he feared that if he followed Sontoku's advice his family would be ruined.

Sontoku resumed: "Do you hesitate because you are grieved at the thought of ruining your family? If you follow my advice with all your heart—if you sell all your possessions and forsake the ordinary way of life—do you think I will unconcernedly watch you starve? You have your path of duty to follow and I have mine. Even those who have lost their homes through their own fault, I help along the road to prosperity, and if you give up all and devote yourself to the cause of reform for the sake of your lord and of your fellows, shall I be fulfilling my duty if I neglect a man so worthy, in his hour of need? I have taught you the true way, for I should be grieved indeed if you

perished in the midst of your desires, like a beast, with your life wasted."

Thus Sontoku spoke sadly out of the overflowing compassion of his heart. Kishiyemon was deeply moved, and made his decision promptly.

"You have taken pity on me," said he, "and have taught me the way an upright man should walk. Your kindness is very great. I will follow your advice and take the path of righteousness."

He went home at once and told his family of his decision. They were dismayed, and some among them wept. Kishiyemon thereupon began to waver. He sent a man to Sontoku to tell him how impossible it was to convince his women-folk.

Sontoku was much grieved, and said, "The fault is not with the women but in his own wavering mind—it is overclouded with selfishness. A small-minded man cannot walk in the way of righteousness. The mistake was mine, to offer such great advice to so small a man." And he sighed deeply.

The messenger returned and told Kishiyemon what Sontoku had said. Kishiyemon looked

very sorrowful, and confessed that it was his fickle mind which was to blame and not his family. Then with great determination he set about selling all his property, and the whole proceeds, over a hundred pieces of gold, he brought to Sontoku, saying:

"How can so stupid a man as I know how to help the poor? Please add this money to your fund and dispense it as you think best."

Sontoku praised him for his sincerity, and accepting the gift told him to work henceforward at breaking up some wild land, and sent some labourers to assist him. Soon several *cho* were prepared for cultivation. Sontoku then gave this land to Kishiyemon, saying:

"This land is better than any you possessed before; from this year cultivate it. You had to pay heavy taxes on your old lands, but for this you need pay nothing for several years to come. By selling your old, unprofitable fields you helped the poor, and now if you cultivate this profitable land your income will be greater than before. Thus profit comes to both sides and no one will suffer loss."

Kishiyemon realised with surprise Sontoku's far-seeing scheme, and gladly bent his energies to the tilling of his new fields. He found that he now possessed the trust and esteem of the people, thanks to Sontoku's good counsel, and he shortly became twice as rich as he had previously been.

CHAPTER XII

SAVING PEOPLE FROM FAMINE

The summer of the fourth year of Tempo (1833) was extremely wet and cool. It chanced one day that Sontoku ate some egg-plant which he found to have a very unusual flavour, like that of autumn fruit. Throwing down his chop-sticks he said, "It is now only the beginning of summer, yet this tastes as though it had been gathered in the late autumn. The circumstance is most unusual, and it can only denote that we shall have no summer this year. The rice and corn will not ripen and all the crops will be poor; we must make provision for this unfortunate state of affairs or all the farmers will starve." Accordingly, he issued the following order throughout the three villages: "This year the crops will fail, owing to the bad weather, and we must provide against famine. I will remit the taxes, for

this year, on one *tan*[1] of ground for each family, so let millet be sown at once in this portion of ground that you may escape starvation. This is absolutely necessary; let each family see that it is done at once."

Many of the people laughed when they heard this. "How can the master tell what the crops will be, clever though he is? If every family grows a tan of millet, what an immense amount of it there will be in the three villages! Where in the world can we store it all? And what can be the use of cultivating a grain which not even the poorest of the people will eat? What a senseless command!" However, as the taxes on that land were excused, and as they were expressly ordered to plant it with millet, they feared the consequences of disobedience, so they set about cultivating the new crop even against their will.

The summer continued wet and cold, and, as Sontoku had foreseen, crops failed everywhere, and famine reigned throughout the northern part of the island. The number of starving people was terrible, but thanks

[1] About a quarter of an acre.

to the foresight of Sontoku there was no distress in the three villages, as the deficiency in the ordinary food supply was made up with the millet. The people were deeply grateful to their far-seeing governor, and the grumblers regretted their hostility to his orders.

Next year Sontoku again issued an order to the following effect: "There is a system in the ways of Nature, and we have had, in the past, a great famine every fifty or sixty years, sometimes every thirty or forty years. Last year's shortage was not very severe and cannot be counted as one of the regular famines, so I feel sure that there will be a bad famine in a few years' time. For this all must diligently prepare. I will continue the remission of one tan's taxes for the next three years, and if any family neglects the cultivation of millet on their plot the headman must report them to me." No objections were made this time, as the villagers appreciated the marvellous foresight which had saved them from the miseries of famine the previous year, and they cultivated their millet fields with great care.

By the end of the third summer they had several thousand *koku* of the grain stored in the village granaries: and that year—the seventh of Tempo—the weather continued wet and cold from May to August, with piercing north winds, so that winter clothes were worn right through the summer months. All the crops failed, and none could remember a famine so severe. In North Japan, where it was at its worst, the suffering was intense, and many were found starved to death in the streets. It was a terrible time. Sakura-machi was the only place which escaped this misery. Sontoku visited every house in the three villages and according to their circumstances divided the people into three classes; very needy, somewhat needy, and not needy. Irrespective of age or sex he reckoned five bags of corn to each person, and to all who did not possess that amount he made up the deficiency; a family of five was provided with twenty-five bags, and a family of ten with fifty. This was more than would fall to the lot of the poor even in an ordinary year, so the people were well content.

But Sontoku exhorted them to new diligence. "Woe be to you," said he, "if you now take your ease and do nothing, while you consume the fruits of your past labours. Because you have done your work well there is not a single starving person among you, and you are no worse off than in your years of plenty, while our hearts are wrung by the tale of deaths among our countrymen elsewhere. Take warning from their fate and labour with fresh energy. Get up at daybreak and plait ropes: spend the day at work on your farms preparing for the coming year, and at night make straw mats. When next year brings good crops you will find the foundations laid for the prosperity of every house. Then what has appeared a great misfortune will prove to be good fortune for you."

The people were moved by his words, and exerting themselves to the utmost in their work, added greatly to the increasing prosperity of the district.

CHAPTER XIII

REFORMING A LAWLESS FARMER

Among the farmers of Monoi-mura was one notorious character who long continued deaf to all the admonitions of Sontoku. Quarrelsome, fond of gaming, a hard drinker, he neglected his work and was extremely poor. Once Sontoku sent one of his servants on a message to the village, past this farmer's house. At the side stood a tottering manure shed, propped up with bamboo poles to keep it from tumbling down. One of these slight supports the messenger chanced to touch in passing, and dislodged it, with the result that the whole structure fell to the ground. The farmer rushed out, and, seeing what had happened, began angrily to abuse the servant for destroying his property. Humbly apologising, the man told the farmer who he was, and how he had accidentally knocked down the support in passing. The farmer became still more angry,

and cried, "If you are a servant of Ninomiya's you shall certainly not be excused. It is most rude and violent of you to knock down my shed. You must be punished." So saying he picked up a long wooden pole to strike him, and the servant, alarmed, ran back with all speed to the Council House, the farmer chasing him all the way and shouting loudly.

When the farmer reached the Council House he demanded that the culprit be given up to him. Many came out and apologised for the mishap, trying to calm him down; but he only became more and more savage, and tried to knock down any one who came within reach of his long pole. Hearing the commotion Sontoku asked the meaning of it, and on learning what had occurred he told them to bring the farmer to him.

When the man was brought in he shouted loudly to Sontoku, "My shed has been knocked down by your servant. How can a farmer do his work without a manure shed? Why do you have a servant who is so violent and rude, knocking down the sheds of the villagers? Give him up to me that I may wreak my anger on him."

Sontoku replied gently, "It is true that your shed came to grief through my servant's fault—still, he did not do it intentionally. Probably it was in a tottering condition, so that it fell easily. And if your shed was in so ruinous a state, perhaps your house is in little better condition."

"True," said the farmer: "I have been poor for so long that my house is almost in ruins, and I cannot afford to repair it, so I am all the more angry at this damage to my shed."

Then Sontoku said, "I shall at once have a new shed built for you, to atone for my servant's inadvertence, and at the same time I will build a new house for you. How would you like that?"

Amazed, the farmer knelt on the floor, his anger quite dispelled. "Ah," said he, "you are compassionate, and offer me a new house. What good fortune!"

"Return home, then," said Sontoku, "pull down your ruined house, and make ready the ground for a new one. I shall at once order some workmen to commence building; then you will feel no enmity towards my servant

since his mischance brings you this good fortune. In fact he is now your benefactor," and Sontoku laughed.

The farmer went home ashamed and repentant. During the erection of the house Sontoku often went to the place and directed the workmen. A good-sized house was built and a substantial shed, and when these were handed over to the farmer he was very grateful and sincerely repented his former wickedness. He was so impressed by Sontoku's kindness that when talking of it to his friends tears would stand in his eyes. From that time he stopped gambling and excessive drinking and began to work diligently on his farm, so that he afterwards became quite well-to-do. Many of the villagers, who had known his previous life and saw the great change in him, commended Sontoku's wisdom and compassion, and the incident was the means of leading many to live better and more industrious lives.

CHAPTER XIV

RESTORATION OF SAKURAMACHI TO PEACE AND PROSPERITY

At last the whole district was restored to a condition of peace and prosperity. Several hundred *cho* of wild land had been brought under cultivation. The population had increased to about 200 families, and so great was their industry that they were able to accomplish the same amount of work which had in olden days occupied 400. The people were all contented and happy; they rejoiced in their work, and their hearts were softened, so they now shared in the joys and sorrows of their neighbours with kindly sympathy. During the first seven years Sontoku had much trouble to endure and his progress was slow, but from the eighth year the people were completely altered, and in three or four years more his work of reform was fully accomplished, a result due entirely to his own sincerity of purpose.

Sontoku now determined to levy full taxes according to the character of every field, but in order to prevent any recurrence of decline through over-taxation, and to insure the lasting prosperity of the inhabitants, he fixed the total taxation of the place at 2000 *koku*. The people were much moved by the benevolence which had reduced their taxes by more than 1000 *koku*, and at the same time the Utsu family were well content to have an assured income of 2000.

Nowhere, now, were dilapidated houses and abandoned fields to be seen: corn grew in abundance, and the irrigation was perfect throughout, while the roads were greatly improved. When strangers passed through the village they were surprised at the beauty of the land, and thought this the richest and finest district in the whole province. The success of Sontoku's system was noised abroad, and many other districts tried to follow his example, while many persons, including Daimyos from neighbouring provinces, came to ask Sontoku's advice.

CHAPTER XV

TEACHING TWO VILLAGE HEADMEN

In the adjoining province of Hidachi were two villages called Tsuji-mura and Kadoi-mura, both in the county of Makabe-gori, which were the property of one Saito, a vassal of the Shogun. He was an extravagant man, and being heavily in debt oppressed his people by compelling them to pay taxes in advance, and even to contribute money in excess of their just tax. Owing to his exactions many of the villagers had been ruined, and the population gradually decreased, while numbers of fields became desolate. The headmen often begged Saito to have pity on the villagers, but always in vain. They themselves sometimes contributed of their own money to save the poor from ruin, but the more they gave the more Saito required of them. They were both greatly disgusted by Saito's want of compassion, and they were in fear lest they too

might be ruined with the rest. At length, hearing much of Sontoku's fatherly treatment of his villagers, the two determined to leave their own villages and go to live at Sakura-machi, for the sake of their future welfare. Accordingly they went to Sontoku and telling him all their troubles asked his permission to live among his people.

Sontoku was sorry for them, but he said, "Your situation is indeed pitiful, but I fear that the course you wish to pursue is not right. The landowner and his people are not two but one, even as in a tree the root, trunk, and branches are all one tree; when the root dies the branches cannot live. Saito's ancestors and yours have for many generations been in the position of lord and people, and they lived in prosperity and content because of the lord's benevolence. Do you not think the benevolence of Saito's ancestors was great? And if it was, can you repay their benevolence even if you both give your whole strength to Saito's service? You now feel resentment towards Saito because he thinks only of his own welfare; but the people, too, have thought not so much of their duty as of their own

prosperity. When their lord is in difficulties they do not want to share in his misfortune but to keep clear of it. This cannot be right. Everything in the universe has its good and its bad times, and nothing can escape its share of adversity. It is so with a country, it is so with a family, it is so with a man. When the lord is prosperous the people receive many benefits. How can you expect Saito's family to be the only one to escape adversity? Neither can you expect your village or your household to escape bad times. Your lord's turn of adversity has come, and in consequence the village too must be in a state of decline. When the lord is prosperous the people receive many benefits, and when the lord is in adversity the people must suffer with him, even as the branches have to share the same fate as the root. So loyal people will seek to repay the benefits their ancestors received from the ancestors of their lord by doing all they can for him, even unto death, in his time of adversity, and they will not think about their household possessions. True your lord is avaricious and selfish, but when he has taken all from the villagers his

exactions must come to an end, as fire will die when there is no more fuel. Throw all the fuel you have into the fire; it will soon be consumed and the fire will no longer be able to burn—the exactions of your lord will soon cease. So give all your possessions to your lord to help him—but in doing this, see that your hearts entertain no resentment towards him, as it would not then be a sincere deed. Think of the past benevolence of Saito's ancestors and desire only his present welfare. When you sell your possessions for him, try to get the highest possible price for them. This is how loyal people should act in such a time of adversity.

"There is providential ordering in the rise and fall of a house, and nobody can escape the decrees of Heaven. Evil times have fallen upon your house, and if you, with short-sighted prudence, try to escape from the further demands of your lord and seek your own welfare, even if you succeed for the time being, sooner or later ruin will surely overtake you or your descendants. Better far that you give up your temporary well-being in order to help your lord, for the sake of benefits received from

his ancestors. If you behave in this way God will have compassion on you and men will sympathise with you, and be assured, sooner or later your house will be restored to its former prosperity. But if you fail in your duty and refuse your lord assistance, you will prove disloyal to your lord and unfilial to your ancestors, and the bad character of your lord will become known abroad. That would indeed be a sad thing.

"Now of these two courses which do you think is the proper one? If you agree with me, the next time your lord asks you for money, present all your possessions to him and say, 'Now that your house is in difficulties we want to do our best to help you for the sake of your past benevolence, and we pray that you may be saved from further anxiety. We are poor and cannot do much, but we have sold all our possessions for as much as we could get and we present the money to you. But how can such a small sum help you out of your difficulties? As we are the headmen of your villages we have been the first to thus offer you all our possessions, but we are sure that others will gladly do the same.

But the lord cannot live without his people any more than they can live without him—each is dependent on the other. So if the people are ruined the land will become waste: no taxes will be forthcoming and you yourself will be ruined also. This thought grieves us deeply, and we beg of you, in your great wisdom, to think out a way to secure your future welfare and perfect your filial duties to your ancestors. Then our joy shall know no bounds.

"'As we have sold all our possessions we shall now have to live a life of the utmost poverty. This we do not mind; but as our ancestors have lived under the benevolence of the lords of these villages for hundreds of years we have not the heart to remove elsewhere, and hope you will permit us to spend the rest of our lives here, where the villagers will give us a room, and we shall work hard to maintain ourselves.'

"If your lord accept your offer and amend his habits, it will lead to lasting peace and prosperity. As to yourselves, work diligently and Heaven will certainly bless you and your houses will again become prosperous.

But remember, you must all the time be thoroughly sincere, and never forget the benefits you have received in the past. But if, in spite of your action, your lord will not listen to your suggestions, then you will have done all that is in your power, and in that case you may come to this village with your families and I will give you as much property as you have given up. But I cannot have people in my villages who bear hard feelings towards their rightful lord: for how could I expect them to be loyal to my lord? And be sure of this, even if I protected such people they would be sure to go wrong in the course of time. But if any come to me after doing the whole of their duty, then I will gladly help them, and I know that the lord of this district would be pleased to have such men, and Heaven would make them prosper.

"You must realise this truth: banish all selfish desires, and carry out the plan I have advised. If you do not, but quarrel with your lord over your possessions and then justify yourselves and seek to escape from the coming misfortune, you will surely come to

ruin in a few years' time. Follow my counsel, therefore, without doubt or hesitation."

Much impressed, the two men promised to follow Sontoku's advice. Afterwards, however, the headman of Tsuji-mura, whose name was Genzaemon, could not overcome his selfish desires: so he continued to feel incensed against his lord and made no effort to help him. Finding him so intractable, Saito expelled him from the village and seized his property. On the other hand, Tozo, of Kadoi-mura, in obedience to Sontoku's teaching, made preparations to give up all his possessions to his lord as soon as he should be called on for assistance. One day a retainer of Saito's, who was collecting money for him, came to the village, and hearing of Tozo's loyal and unselfish preparations was so moved with admiration that he left the place without asking him for anything. The same man returned to Kadoi-mura some time later, but again could not bring himself to ask anything from one whose loyalty prompted so great a sacrifice; so Tozo's family escaped ruin by the very readiness to give up all.

In reply to a question as to how he was

so well able to predict what would happen, Sontoku said, "When a mighty wind rises it shakes the trees violently, but if the trees be felled no wind can disturb them. The lord of that district was avaricious and insatiable, and Genzaemon stood in his way with his selfish desires, so he could not escape ruin: but Tozo cut down the tree of selfishness, so the mighty wind of avarice could not touch it. This is all in accordance with the laws of nature, and so clear and simple that no one could doubt as to the outcome."

CHAPTER XVI

RESTORING AOKI VILLAGE

Aoki-mura of Makabe-gori in Hidachi was a village belonging to a vassal of the Shogun named Kawasoye, yielding him, nominally, an income of 850 *koku*. In the Genroku period (1688–1704) the village had about 130 houses, and was said to have been very rich and flourishing. A river called Sakura ran past the village, and the people had made a dam to enclose water for irrigating their rice-fields. This dam was originally built only of sand, with no rock or stones, but after the place came into the possession of the Kawasoye family, in the era of Hoei (1704–1711), they put in great stones and logs of wood to make the bottom more solid. Still, however, when excessive rain fell, the bottom of the dam was washed out and the sluices broken, so that the water escaped and they were left without enough for the

fields. In former times, whenever such an accident happened the dam was at once repaired, no matter what the expense; but the present Kawasoye was too poor to do this, and now the farmers were no longer able properly to cultivate their farms, and the fields had gradually become wild and barren, overgrown with long grass. In the Temmei period (1781–1789) the grass caught fire and more than thirty houses were burned down. The poverty of the village kept increasing, and there were now only twenty-nine houses standing, and these half ruined. The taxes were correspondingly diminished, and Kawasoye became wretchedly poor.

Kanyemon Tateno, headman of the village, was an upright and sincere man. He tried to restore the village in various ways, but in vain. He had heard much about Sontoku's work at Sakuramachi, which was only about seven miles from Aoki-mura, so one day he gathered the villagers together, and after telling them that it was beyond his power to avert the ruin toward which their village was rapidly tending, he gave them an account of the restoration of Sakuramachi by Son-

toku. "Sontoku," said he in conclusion, "is a kind and benevolent man. He treats his own villagers as a father treats his children, and he will surely have compassion on us if we go to him and ask him to teach us. If he will help us I am sure this place will be restored to its former prosperity. But I hear that he can read the hearts of men like the pages of an open book, so unless we are all perfectly sincere in heart he will have nothing to do with us, however much we may entreat him. So the success of our appeal depends not so much on Sontoku himself as on our sincerity. Now what is your feeling in the matter?"

All the people at once replied that they would ask Sontoku's help in all sincerity. So Kanyemon went to the owner of the village and told him what they had decided to do. Kawasoye was delighted, and sent one of his retainers, Namiki by name, to accompany Kanyemon and the villagers to Sakuramachi to ask Sontoku's help. This was in the third year of Tempo (1832).

Sontoku refused to help them, saying he was too busy; but when they persisted in

their request he answered: "The reason why your village is so poor is not lack of water for your fields but your own laziness. You could easily have planted other grain which does not need so much water as rice, but instead of this you let your fields go to ruin and spend your time in gambling. Is it any wonder that such evil courses have brought you to ruin? The land is the chief source of your maintenance, but you have deserted it and are trying to find a means of support elsewhere. That is like stopping up a well and then seeking for water. My method is to work hard and live frugally, and thus save money to help those who are in difficulties and do all the good I can. By this method poor villages are certain to become rich, and even those that are ruined will return to prosperity; but in your village you do just the contrary. I am sorry you are so poor, but you have brought it on yourselves, and nobody from outside can do anything to help you; so you must not come to me again."

Kanyemon now said, in tears, "The words you have spoken are quite true, but we have come to you repenting of our past faults. We

have sworn to work our hardest and to bear any trials, however severe: so we beseech you to overlook the past and teach us to labour for the future."

"Your bad habits have continued long," replied Sontoku; "your present promise of amendment may prove short. When people are in extremity they do not mind bearing hardships, but as soon as they become a little better off they return to their former habits. If after spending much time in restoration the people return to their evil ways it would be better never to have started the reform at all."

The villagers continued to entreat Sontoku to help them, saying they were ready to bear any hardship, and at last he said to them, "It is very hard work restoring a ruined village; I will show you something much easier to do. I hear that the fields of your village are covered with tall wild grass, and that in winter this grass is sometimes accidentally set on fire, and often houses are destroyed by the flames. It would be quite an easy matter for you to cut the grass, but instead of that you leave it and allow it to destroy your houses. What could be more foolish? Stop talking about restoring

your village till you have cut all the grass. When you have done this I will buy it of you."

The villagers went home rejoicing, and every person in the place worked hard from daybreak to sunset cutting down the grass. They soon had more than 1700 bundles, for which Sontoku paid them a much higher price than was usual for wild grass. The villagers were delighted with the amount they received, and now greatly regretted their past lazy habits.

Sontoku then asked them if their houses were quite rainproof, and learned that most of the roofs leaked. He thereupon promised to mend their roofs, and added that he would mend the roofs of the village temples too, as temples were the most sacred places, and the people could never have true prosperity while they neglected these. So Sontoku ordered his men to go to the village and mend all leaky roofs, and in the course of a few days the roofs of temples and houses were all newly thatched, greatly to the improvement of their appearance. The headman and the villagers felt most grateful, and came to the Council House to thank Sontoku. Then Sontoku said to them, "Now that the roofs are all newly thatched and the

grass is cut down there is no fear of either leakage or fire, and you can live in peace and comfort; but as for my methods of restoring a ruined village, it is not possible for you to practise them, so you had better give up all idea of doing so."

But Kanyemon and his followers repeated their former request again and again, till at length Sontoku said, "All the fields in your village are uncultivated; how can you expect to prosper if you do not till your fields? If you will rouse yourselves and cultivate them properly I will do my best to help you. I will build a strong dam for you so that you may have no lack of water."

The villagers were delighted and answered, "It is not so difficult to cultivate our fields, only we were in such trouble through lack of water. If now, thanks to your wisdom and generosity, we have our dam rebuilt we shall at once recommence our farm labours."

They returned home in great joy, and in the course of a few months most of the fields were opened up. Then for the first time Sontoku visited Aoki-mura. He made a round of the fields and then said to the villagers, "Your

lands have been quickly cultivated as a result of your industry. This industry and the laziness of the past have both been qualities of the same persons, but the results are as different as black and white. So your prosperity and your adversity depend entirely upon your own behaviour; if you give up altogether your past idleness and adhere to your present habits of industry, the restoration of your village will not be a difficult matter at all. And now, as I promised you, I will build you a good dam so that you shall have plenty of water."

Much gratified, the people thanked Sontoku for his kindness.

Sontoku now studied the flow of the river Sakura and the system of irrigation for the village. Next, finding a rocky place on the side of a hill, he sent workmen to get down the rocks and to fell timber. To the workmen he said, "We must build this dam with all speed, for we cannot tell when the river may rise, and if a flood come before we have finished it, all our labour will be wasted. We must exert ourselves to the utmost; I will pay double wages, and those who are too weak

to work hard all day need come only half the day—those who are lazy we do not want at all."

Encouraged by Sontoku's words, all worked very hard, carrying rocks and timber from the hill to the banks of the stream. Sontoku then ordered them to build a thatched roof over the water. They could not understand what this was for, and some secretly laughed at the idea, but the roof was built. When finished, Sontoku said that one of them must go out on the roof and cut the ropes which held it to the banks. They were all astonished, and no one dared to undertake the task. When Sontoku asked why no one went, they replied that it was a very perilous task, as they would fall into the river with the roof and perhaps be drowned. Thereupon Sontoku himself jumped on to the roof and quickly cut several of the ropes. The roof shook and fell down on the water where it floated, and Sontoku, standing on the roof in perfect safety, told the astonished workmen that if there had been any danger in the operation he would not have asked them to undertake it. He then ordered them to throw stones and branches on top of the

roof, from both banks, to sink it as a foundation for their dam. The thatching prevented the fine sand from moving, and no water could get through it; and as they constructed the dam he put in two water gates, a small one to be opened when the river was slightly swollen, and a large one for use when the water was very high, to prevent floods.

While the work was in progress Sontoku provided *sake* and rice cakes for the labourers, telling them that all might help themselves when they pleased, provided they did not eat or drink too much, while those who were tired after half a day's work were at liberty to go home and rest. As a result all the men put their best efforts into the work, and they called it "Paradise work."

When the dam was commenced the people thought it would take at least fifty days to complete, and would cost more than a hundred pieces of gold, but it was finished in ten days and at a cost of less than half their estimate. The dam, too, was quite unique in construction—none of them had ever seen anything like it, and all marvelled at Sontoku's ability. Though the river often overflowed thereafter,

the dam was so strong that it suffered no damage.

The villagers now reconstructed their irrigation ditches, and they found that their new dam impounded so much water that they were able to give some to the neighbouring village after using all they required for their own fields. Even in the driest periods there was no lack, to the great content of the farmers.

Sontoku now told the villagers to choose those of their number who were most filial, kind, and good, and to the ones who received most votes he gave generous prizes. He also helped the poorest of the community by paying their debts or by providing them with horses, farming implements, or other necessaries. He further helped the people to make new roads and bridges. At the same time he never ceased teaching them the true way of life, and gradually the old bad habits were eradicated and all the villagers became industrious in work and frugal in living. The products of the land increased, and they were able to pay double the former amount of tax, so that both owner and people were well off. In the year of the great famine Sontoku gave five bags

of corn to each person, young or old, as in his own village, and this made the people more grateful to him than ever. They worked more diligently than before. Poor people from other places came to live here : Sontoku treated them all kindly, and the population continued to increase in numbers and in wealth.

CHAPTER XVII

HELPING THE POOR VILLAGERS OF AOKI

At the time when Sontoku went to help the inhabitants of Aoki-mura he found some families about to leave the village on account of their ever-increasing debts. Sontoku stopped them and said, "It is useless for you to leave Aoki. If you cannot support your families here, where you have a house and field, how can you expect to do it in another locality where you have nothing at all of your own? You will simply starve. As I feel the deepest sympathy for you I will give each of you a hoe. With this implement you can get rid of your poverty, pay off your debts, and acquire wealth."

The men thought he was mocking them. "How, then," said they, "if it be possible to gain wealth with nothing but a hoe, do we find ourselves reduced to poverty in spite of all our labour?"

"Because you did not know the right way

to set about getting wealth," replied Sontoku. "Everything in the universe is in a state of incessant activity; Nature is never idle, so she is always flourishing. If men will learn from this to labour ceaselessly, then they will find it impossible to become poor. Now my counsel to you is this. Go to the wild land and attack it with this hoe. Those who are too old or too young for harder work can shake the earth from the roots of the wild grass as you dig it up with your hoe, and thus, if you all work zealously until your hoes are worn out, you will find that you have by that time prepared a large area of new ground. Then cultivate these fields with unremitting energy, and you will soon find yourselves well off. Sell your old fields now to pay off your debts, and set to work at once preparing wild land, for which you will have no taxes to pay for several years. This is how you may become wealthy with only a hoe. It would be very foolish of you to leave this place, where all these opportunities are open to you if you will only work hard, and go away to a place where there is nothing for you to do."

The people were much impressed, and after considering Sontoku's advice for some time they all decided to follow it; so he gave a hoe to each of them. They sold their fields as he advised, and then, having paid off their debts, began breaking up wild land. They worked most industriously, and when others saw how they prospered as the years passed all laboured more earnestly, until, in a comparatively short time, most of the wild land was brought under cultivation.

CHAPTER XVIII

ADVICE TO ENŌ THE PRIEST, AND HELPING THE CHIEF RETAINER OF KARASUYAMA

KARASUYAMA was a district belonging to a relative of Lord Okubo which had fallen into a ruinous state. The family temple of the lord of the district, which was called Tenshoji, was served by a chief priest named Enō. This priest was much concerned at the condition of the place, and he tried his best to improve it, inviting immigrants from other parts to come and open up wild land, and providing them with money of his own to enable them to do so. When the great famine occurred in the seventh year of Tempo these new-comers, who were still very poor, could not get enough to eat, and Enō feared that they might all be driven away again and his plans and efforts prove fruitless. Just at this time he heard of Sontoku and his success at Sakuramachi, so after taking counsel with an officer of his lord's,

named Sugaya, he went on foot to Sakuramachi to see Sontoku. The latter, however, refused to see him and sent this message: "Buddhist priests should attend to their own affairs. I must attend to mine, and have not time to spare to talk with a priest. Go away at once."

Enō begged Sontoku to take pity on him and instruct him, as he could not bear to go back and watch his people starve without knowing how to help them. When Sontoku still refused to listen to him the priest said he would not go away, but would stay there and starve himself, rather than go back and see his people in such distress.

For two days Enō sat on the ground in front of the gate, in his priest's robes, eating nothing. Then Sontoku sent for him, and on his being admitted, said to him in a loud voice, "Priest, why do you disturb me at my work? and what sense is there in saying you will die? Do you not know the business of a priest? Is it a priest's work to open wild land and to save the people from starvation?"

Enō replied, "It is the will of Buddha to save the people, and it is a priest's work to do the will of Buddha."

But Sontoku answered, "Each person has his special mission, and it is for the lord of the district to look after the material needs of the people. In trying to open up the wild lands and in saving the starving populace you are doing the work which your lord ought to do. Your duty is to attend to spiritual matters; to pray for the welfare of the people and the peace of your lord. You have neglected your own duty and are trying to do another man's. You ought to teach your lord to do his duty and pray to Buddha yourself. And now, if you wish to starve, do so in your own temple and not in front of my gate."

Having spoken thus, in a voice of thunder, Sontoku abruptly left the room, and the priest, much distressed in mind, left Sakuramachi.

Enō walked day and night until he reached his home, and he at once told Sugaya the result of his journey, giving Sontoku much praise. Sugaya determined to go and see Sontoku himself, after getting an order from his lord; and he immediately despatched a messenger to Sakuramachi to inform Sontoku of his intended visit. Sontoku at first refused to see the messenger, on the ground that he

was too busy; but as the man insisted on seeing him, he at length consented, and addressed him in loud and commanding tones: "Is not Sugaya one of the chief retainers of the lord of Karasuyama? And is it not his duty to help his lord in benevolent care of his people's peace and welfare? Yet his granaries are empty and he can do nothing to save the people from starvation when famine comes. This is all due to bad government. Where is his benevolence? How can a lord be fulfilling his duty if he allows the people entrusted to him to starve? Yet the lord and his retainers live in ease and luxury, careless of their duty. I do not want to have such men come to my house; and besides, it is quite useless to see them. Go back to Sugaya and stop him from coming to see me." And Sontoku left the messenger alone, giving him no time for a reply.

The messenger, much surprised by this tirade, hastened back to Karasuyama and gave Sugaya an account of his interview. His face was still pale with apprehension as he said, "His voice was like thunder. He must be a madman; do not go to the place at all."

Sugaya, however, was impressed by Sontoku's words. "He is quite right," he said: "if we had done our duty as we should there would not now be this distress. But what other man would dare to accuse us boldly in this fashion? He is indeed a great man."

Then Sugaya went to his lord, and giving him a description of Sontoku and his work, told him his messenger's experience. He asked the lord to write a letter with his own hand soliciting Sontoku's advice. He added that he would deliver the letter himself, and tell Sontoku of his lord's benevolent concern for his people, then he felt sure Sontoku would aid them with his counsel. The lord of Karasuyama approved the plan, and wrote a letter to Sontoku at once.

Sugaya lost no time in going to Sakuramachi, where he presented the letter to Sontoku in person, and supplemented it with his own eloquence, telling Sontoku the whole state of affairs, and begging for the benefit of his great wisdom. Sontoku sighed as he thought, "This is no part of my duty, but alas! how many lords there are who are not performing their duty properly. Now the lord of Karasuyama has

repented, and as he looks to me for advice, the fate of his people depends upon me. Then, too, he is a relative of Lord Okubo: I had better lend him what aid I can." So he told Sugaya all about the causes which make for the rise and fall of a district, and explained the sources of prosperity and of ruin, and instructed him in the true methods of governing a people. His words flowed smoothly as running water, and Sugaya was carried away by his eloquence.

In conclusion Sontoku said, "It is not my duty to help the starving people of Karasuyama, but as the lord is related to Lord Okubo, I will do what I can to help you. First, however, your lord must speak to Lord Okubo about the matter, so that he may give me orders in regard to it, and I will speak to him myself also. Meanwhile, as this will delay action for a few days, take this money and buy food for the most needy of your district." So saying he handed Sugaya 200 *ryo*. The retainer thanked him heartily, and returned to Karasuyama feeling like one in a dream, hardly able to believe in his success, so kind and generous had Sontoku proved at their first meeting.

CHAPTER XIX

HELPING THE PEOPLE OF KARASUYAMA

When Lord Okubo heard of the straits to which the people of Karasuyama were reduced, he commissioned Sontoku to assist them; and the latter promptly sent rice and millet to the value of 2000 *ryo*, the carts which carried it forming a train twenty miles in length. Within the precincts of the temple, eleven huts were built, and here they gathered together all the starving people of the district and gave them rice or millet gruel. Great care was taken to keep everything about the place clean and sanitary, to guard against epidemic; and every precaution was used to prevent fire. Sontoku's instructions, on these and other lines, were carefully followed; Enō, the chief priest, worked incessantly night and day, and everything went on smoothly. Several thousands of people who might otherwise have starved to death were regularly fed, and there

was not even a single case of illness. All were sincerely grateful to Sontoku, and such faith had they in his ability that they sent him a petition, signed by the lord and all his retainers, asking him to undertake the restoration of their district.

This Sontoku said he was unable to do, and when they continued praying for his help he said to the petitioners, "It is a great undertaking to restore a district which has fallen into ruin and decay. You can accomplish it only by bearing the burdens of the people, giving up all thought of ease and luxury so long as there are any needy persons in your district, and treating them as you would your own children. Your motive in desiring the restoration of your villages is not that the welfare of the people may be secured, but that your income may be increased, so that you may live in more comfort and luxury. This being the case, your ultimate ruin is certain. There is enough provision in the universe for every living creature, so that if each lives within his income there can be no deficiency; but if you will not consent to do that, then millions will not be enough for you. You are really crying

for food when you are surrounded by it. If you had but lived within your means all would have been well. But there is no use trying to alter the effect until the cause has been removed. My method of restoration is simply to live within one's means, to bear distress bravely, and to love the people. You do not desire to practise this method, so I can do no good by teaching you; should I try to do so my teaching would bear no fruit."

Sugaya and his associates were much impressed, and they determined to unite in an effort to put Sontoku's principles into practice, and they at last persuaded him to lend his aid. Sontoku studied the average yearly produce of the district, fixed an annual allowance for their expenditure, and gave them some money to be used in opening up wild land. Within two years over 200 *cho* of wild land had been reclaimed, and the annual production was greatly increased. Sontoku said they should now have no difficulty in effecting the restoration of the place with this added production, provided only that they lived within their means, as everything depended upon that.

Enō the priest helped Sugaya to carry out

the reforms, so many of the people lent their aid as well. One day Enō was seen fishing in the river with a net, much to the people's surprise, for it is considered a sin for a Buddhist priest to kill any living thing. Some thought he must be mad, but when he was asked to explain his action he replied, "True, it is a sin to take life, yet what I do is in perfect accordance with the spirit, if not the letter, of Buddha's teaching. Thousands of lives have been saved in this district through the services of Sontoku, and I have vainly tried to find some means to show my gratitude. Now if I catch some fish and present them to him, he will appreciate the motive of the gift, and, eating the food, will thereby be strengthened for his work. This added strength of Sontoku will mean much to our lord and to the people here, so that these fish will not have been killed wantonly, but by their death will have accomplished much good. If I catch too many to give to Sontoku, then I will sell the rest in the market and give the proceeds to the poor, and this also will be good."

So Enō caught many fish, and taking them to Sakuramachi he presented them to Sontoku,

who accepted them gladly, as he divined the priest's motive. Enō stayed two days with Sontoku, but remained silent the whole time. When he said good-bye on the third day, Sontoku asked him if he had no questions he would like to put. The priest replied, "I really came here for the purpose of asking you something, but after spending two days in your company my problem is solved—all has become as clear as noonday: so I have no need to trouble you with questions. I feel better able now to do my part toward the restoration, and you need feel no anxiety with regard to us."

So the priest returned home, and thereafter he could often be seen fishing, and all the money he realised in this way he added to the restoration fund.

CHAPTER XX

TEACHING SUGAYA

One day Sugaya and Enō called on Sontoku at Sakuramachi to tell him of their intention to go to Atsugi, a neighbouring district belonging to the lord of Karasuyama, to introduce Sontoku's methods there, and promote the prosperity of the place. Sontoku was silent for some time, then he tried to dissuade them from their purpose, saying, "Everything has its proper season. Seeds must be sown in the spring; if you sow them in winter, not only will your labour be in vain but you will lose your seeds into the bargain. A time will come when the people of Atsugi will ask you to help them and to introduce my methods. When that time arrives, instruct them; but do not go to them now—it will do them no good and may be productive of harm."

But the two had already made their arrangements, and had got an order from their lord

to go, so they determined to pay the place a brief visit. When they reached Atsugi they found a plague prevailing there. They were both attacked by the disease, and though Sugaya recovered, Enō died.

Sontoku was much distressed to hear of Enō's death, and feared for the future. "The visit to Atsugi was undertaken with the best of motives," said he; "they went to teach the rich to help the poor. But the time was not yet ripe: they should have waited until the people were moved by the benevolence of their lord to try and improve their condition. And now Enō is gone. He and Sugaya were like the two wheels of a cart; how can one move the cart alone? Ah! so much depends upon a great personality. I fear the providential time for Karasuyama's prosperity has not yet arrived."

Sontoku's fears proved well founded. The district of Karasuyama now yielded 2000 *koku* of rice beyond what was necessary for the inhabitants, and it seemed certain that in ten years' time the complete restoration of the district would be an accomplished fact. But after the death of Enō progress seemed

very slow. Then some retainers who loved ease and luxury brought false charges against Sugaya, and procured his expulsion from the district, and they quickly did away with Sontoku's methods.

When Sugaya was just beginning his reforms Sontoku said to him one day, "From olden times it has often happened that men who worked for their country's good have been unable to fulfil their task because they have been made the victims of false charges, maliciously brought against them. Now their misfortune was not only due to the malice of their enemies, but also to the fact of their falling short of their whole duty. Why should men who want to help their country receive a salary for doing so? They ought to return their salary with the request that the money be devoted to the cause, and they should be content to live as the poorest of the poor, bearing all hardships patiently, and giving all their time and energy to the country's service. Then the other retainers, seeing their conduct, would be ashamed to live in ease and idleness, and the people would bear their hardships cheerfully, and all would be anxious to do more

for their country. No task, however hard, would then be impossible; and even if the patriot made some mistakes, through lack of foresight, the people would recognise the sincerity of his purpose, and no false charges or slander could effect his downfall. Such sincere and unselfish conduct is essential to accomplish a great task, carrying it through to the end. Alas! how often have even great men been the victims of slander because they did not take these steps. Now if you would accomplish the work of reform in your district, you must certainly give up your salary and your position of honour, and do your utmost, loyally, as one of the people. Otherwise, this work you are trying to accomplish, which even men of great wisdom have found supremely difficult, must result only in failure. As you have a family to support, and might starve if deprived of your income all at once, I will myself supply you with a sufficiency of food; but believe me, if you do not take this step, you are foredoomed to failure."

Sugaya had followed Sontoku's advice, and his salary was added to the restoration fund; but when people learned that he was receiving

help from Sontoku, some sneered at his self-sacrifice as a pretence, while others laughed at him for taking alms. Sugaya quailed before this ridicule, and persuading himself that the surrender of his salary was productive of more harm than good, he decided, without consulting Sontoku, to receive it again. This came to Sontoku's knowledge, and he was much grieved, realising that there was now little prospect of the restoration being accomplished, as the people would sooner or later remove Sugaya: nor was Sontoku willing to assist in a great work with men who changed their minds and regulated their conduct by the criticisms of others.

So now, it had come to pass as Sontoku had foreseen: Sugaya was expelled from Karasuyama. His own methods of reform were stopped, and the lord of the district forbade his people going to Sakuramachi to see Sontoku.

Some time later, Sugaya visited Sontoku and told how he had been expelled as a result of false charges against him, and in spite of all he had done for his people. "I am living at a friend's house," he continued,

"so I shall not starve: but I have a younger brother at Yedo, who is blind. He was doing quite well teaching music; but times have been hard lately, and I was obliged to contribute somewhat towards his support until, through no fault of my own, I was driven out of my place. Now my brother has got into debt to the amount of 20 *ryo*, and if only he could clear himself of this he would be able to get along fairly well. If you would be so kind as to lend me this amount I should be most grateful."

Sontoku, after a short silence, replied, "Sugaya, your conduct has not been what it should. I am going to show you where you have been lacking. But first—shall I lend you this money now, or will you wait until you have heard what I have to say?"

Sugaya replied that he would first hear Sontoku's instruction, so the latter continued, "You are wrong to blame others without repenting of your own faults. A loyal retainer is always deeply concerned about the welfare of his province and his people, not alone while he is in office, but ten times more so when he is not; for in the latter case he has no longer

the same opportunity for looking after their welfare himself.

"A few years ago you came to ask me to save your people from the misfortunes which had resulted from your misgovernment. You urged your request so earnestly that I thought you were really concerned about the welfare of your people, so I took great pains to help you. I did all I could for you, and taught you my methods, in spite of my pressing duties. But though so highly favoured by your lord for a long time, it seems that you were concerned about your country only while in office, and now that you have lost your position you not only feel no more concern but you put the blame for your misfortune on others. Since I heard of your expulsion I have felt the greatest concern for all in Karasuyama, and I have prayed day and night that the lord of the district might repent and take pity on his people. I have thought that you too would be more than ever concerned for your people, and filled with grief that your lord had ceased to carry out his benevolent designs toward his district, and that you would pity the retainers who did not

prove loyal and unselfish. I pictured you blaming yourself and attributing your misfortune not to others but to your own lack of sincerity and your misdeeds. I fancied your heart and mind always with your lord and his people, praying for their welfare and considering means of serving them better in the future, to make up for your past mistakes and their deplorable consequences. And behold, you have quite forgotten your duty to them, and you come to me to-day to beg help in a private affair of your own!

"All this is the result of your infirmity of purpose. Is it any wonder that you were expelled and all your labours came to naught? In a time like this, if your heart were in any wise loyal, you would repent and find where the fault lay in yourself; you would be distressed that your present way of life was not hard enough to redeem your past misdeeds—yes, even though you should be reduced to live in the streets. Then your family, seeing your sincerity, would be willing to share your hardships with you; and others, too, would be moved by your sincere and loyal heart. Every one would pity you, and the time would come

when your lord and his retainers would repent of their having driven you into exile. Your brother would not now be looking to you for assistance, even if he were starving; more concerned for you and your loyal desires than for his own well-being, he would be praying that your wish might be fulfilled. Or, if your brother cannot understand such an attitude, you should teach him, and then let him share your difficulties with you. A man's mind seems so small, yet one sincere mind will move the gods, and heaven and earth will be moved too. It was your sincerity when you first came to see me that induced me to help Karasuyama to such an extent; and if you had but kept that sincerity of purpose and followed my advice about your salary, you could never have been driven out, whatever charges had been made against you. While you were unfalteringly sincere in purpose, benevolent government was put into practice with great success; but when your sincerity failed, all went wrong. This shows that the prosperity or the decline of Karasuyama depended upon your mind and on nothing else. How, then, do you blame others? I

thought you would be ashamed to come and see me before you had put your faults right; I did not expect to see you now, and certainly not to have you come to borrow money for your private concerns! And even if I help your brother now, he will get no real benefit, so long as your mind remains in such a state. This, too, grieves me."

Sugaya prostrated himself before Sontoku, overcome with shame, and said, "It is indeed all my fault. Though I knew that I was stupid, I never imagined that I was taking such a wrong course. You have cleared away the mists of ignorance from my eyes, and I will follow all your advice. As for my brother, please forget that I have told you of him at all."

But Sontoku took 20 *ryo* out of his purse and said that he had admonished Sugaya for the sake of the people of Karasuyama, and as he seemed to have learned his lesson, it was best that he should take the money for his brother. Sugaya was surprised at the offer, and refused to accept it, until Sontoku said, "You have learned your lesson well: but as you promised to get this money for your

brother you must give it to him. He has been waiting for it, relying on your promise, and he will not be able to understand your sudden change of mind." Then Sugaya accepted the money gratefully, and took his departure.

Afterwards, when Sontoku told any one about Sugaya, he would say, "Remember this case and take warning, that you do not make similar mistakes. Sometimes one person's action influences the whole country for good or evil, so each individual's conduct becomes a matter of the greatest importance."

After Sontoku's methods were given up in Karasuyama the debts of the people again increased, they were unable to pay the proper taxes, and their condition again became deplorable. The lord of the place now regretted having exiled Sugaya and discarded Sontoku's methods, so he sent again to Sontoku to ask for help. To the retainer who bore the message Sontoku said, "Where is Sugaya now? Your lord sent him to me before, and I told him just what to do. Why did you remove him from his post without consulting me?

If you are now really desirous of practising my methods, you must find Sugaya."

The retainer returned and told his lord what Sontoku said, so they sought out Sugaya and gave him a position at a small salary. On hearing of this, Sontoku sent word to the lord of Karasuyama, saying, "Sugaya was dismissed through charges that had no foundation, and in spite of all he did for the district at the time of the famine. If it had not been for him I should never have come to your assistance at all. Now you have repented of your injustice to him and you have gone to him again to take charge of your government. Why, then, do you give him such a small salary? You ought to give him more than he received before." The lord acknowledged the justice of this, and thereafter paid Sugaya a higher salary than he had ever had before.

Shortly after this, Sontoku received a call to help the Central Government of Yedo, so he was too busy to personally advise Sugaya as to the proper course to pursue; and a few years later Sugaya died, so the restoration of Karasuyama was again stopped. The

grief of the people was increased by the thought that if they had not dismissed Sugaya and interrupted his work the restoration of their district would have been completed by the time of his death.

CHAPTER XXI

GETTING MAGOYEMON OUT OF PRISON

In the town of Ōiso there lived a man named Kawasakiya Magoyemon, whose family had been rice merchants for generations and had amassed a large fortune. On account of his notorious parsimony this man had acquired the nickname of "Sendai Tsuho," after an obsolete coin, the idea being that Magoyemon's money was never put into circulation.

At the time of the great famine conditions were very bad at Ōiso, and although the Government issued a large amount of corn to the inhabitants, it was far from being sufficient, and there was much suffering among the people. Some of the wealthier houses were broken into and their possessions were destroyed. Some men went to Magoyemon's place to ask him to reduce the price of rice for the sake of the starving people, but Magoyemon happened to be away at Yedo at the time;

and his chief clerk said he could do nothing in his master's absence. Thereupon the hungry mob broke into the house and destroyed everything they could lay their hands on, and the officials had much difficulty in dispersing the mob and reducing the people to order. When Magoyemon returned shortly after, he was most indignant, and at once appealed to the authorities to punish the offenders, but the authorities put him into prison, on the ground that he himself was the cause of the disturbance, inasmuch as he had roused the starving people by refusing to help them, although he had plenty of rice to spare. He replied that he was going to help the sufferers, but they broke in without giving him time. The authorities would not excuse him, however, maintaining that he had not acted promptly, as he should have done.

Soon after this a fire broke out, and Magoyemon's house and all of his property that the mob had spared was now destroyed by it. His wife was prostrated by these misfortunes, and died a few months later, leaving two young children. Magoyemon's anger, augmented by his sorrow, became un-

governable: he wept and gnashed his teeth like a madman, swearing to be revenged.

Magoyemon's brother-in-law Sōbei, of Isehara, was a man of very different character —upright, generous, and unselfish. Having tried to save Magoyemon by every means in his power, he at length went to ask advice of Sontoku, whom he knew personally. Sontoku said to him, "This calamity is one which many wealthy houses have suffered; it is an act of Providence against which human power is of no avail. Though I do not know the history of Magoyemon's family, I have no doubt that his ancestors amassed their wealth unjustly. As his misfortunes are more than ordinarily severe, so their cause must be unusually grave. I hear that his ancestors were rice merchants; probably at the time of the last great famine they took advantage of the people's extremity to wring a fortune from them by selling rice at exorbitant prices. This would account for their descendant's misfortune; and if punishment has been delayed for sixty years, it is because the intervening generations had performed good deeds and so averted the evil.

But now Magoyemon, by his own bad conduct, has incurred the penalty, not alone for his own misdeeds, but for those of his forefathers as well: yet instead of acknowledging his fault he lays the blame upon the starving populace, and instead of recognising the justice of the authorities in reprimanding him, he blames them also. If you plant marrow seeds you must expect to get a crop of marrows—you need not look for egg-plant. Men reap what they sow, and Magoyemon cannot expect to be an exception to the rule. He has sown evil deeds and now he must reap misfortune. I sympathise with you and pity him, but we cannot resist Providence and we cannot help him."

Sōbei was surprised at Sontoku's insight into Magoyemon's family history, and he told him that his inferences were quite correct. Then he said, "You say my brother-in-law cannot be helped; do you not say that because I am lacking in sincerity? I once listened to your teachings, and you then said that to turn misfortune into good fortune, perfect sincerity was necessary, and no amount of intelligence or shrewdness could make up

for the lack of that. Now if there be any means of helping him whatever, I will make every effort in absolute sincerity. Please take pity and teach me."

Seeing his great sincerity, Sontoku said, "I admire your resolution, but Magoyemon's misfortune is so overwhelming, it is like trying to move a heavy rock with a piece of string. Still there is one way. You say your wife is Magoyemon's sister; she must be deeply grieved by her brother's calamity, and has no doubt given up all manner of luxuries. Is it not so?"

"She is indeed grieved," replied Sōbei, "but I cannot say that she is abstaining from luxuries."

"Ah," said Sontoku, "one who feels true grief cannot bear to indulge in luxury. Now that her brother is suffering the hardships of prison life, how is it that she is so little troubled? She feels sorry, perhaps, but she cannot understand the case fully; you must teach her, Sōbei, and show her how she can at least *try* to help Magoyemon, though the success of her efforts is far from certain. Now that her brother is in prison, when he is cold

he cannot warm himself, and when he is hungry he cannot satisfy his appetite; so tell your wife to abstain from all luxuries, and to sell all her possessions, so that she may save as much money as possible to help to re-establish her brother's house when he comes out of prison. If your wife listens to your advice and follows it with all sincerity, it will be a means of helping him; sincerity moves heaven and earth, so surely your wife's sincerity will save your brother. If you cannot bring your wife to act in this way, then I have nothing else to advise."

Sobei was well pleased to hear of a possible way of saving his brother-in-law, and was on the point of saying good-bye, when Sontoku added, "If your wife consents, as soon as she has put my plan into practice send a man to Magoyemon to tell him that his sister is abstaining from all luxuries and selling her possessions in order to help him when he comes out of prison, and that she is praying for his future prosperity."

Thanking Sontoku warmly for his advice, Sōbei returned to his home and told his wife all that Sontoku had said. She was much

moved, and said that if there were any means by which she could help her brother she would do it most gladly, even to giving up her life. She at once set about selling her possessions, and deprived herself of everything but actual necessaries. Then Sōbei sent a messenger to tell Magoyemon of Sontoku's teaching and his sister's sacrifices: then for the first time Magoyemon felt ashamed of himself, and he wept tears of penitence and humiliation. From that time he was a changed man: instead of denouncing the authorities and those who had destroyed his property, he never ceased blaming himself. The authorities now thought they could set Magoyemon at liberty, as there seemed no further danger of his trying to inflict injury upon any one by way of revenge; so having admonished him as to his conduct they released him. Thus after three years of imprisonment Magoyemon returned to his home.

CHAPTER XXII

REFORMING MAGOYEMON

When Magoyemon returned to his home and heard from his clerk all the details of the outrage, and when he saw with his own eyes the havoc wrought by the mob and the fire, and found his two little children still lamenting their lost happiness, his anger was again kindled, and once more he determined upon revenge, and he took counsel with two of his relatives as to the means of accomplishing his purpose. Sōbei, hearing of this, was very sad, as he feared that his wife's sacrifices had been all in vain. He knew it was useless to try and dissuade the men from their design of vengeance, but he pointed out to them how difficult, if not impossible, it would be both to compass their revenge and to rebuild the house, and he advised them to go to Sontoku with their difficulties. He told them about Sontoku, his great wisdom and generosity, and the

wonderful work he had accomplished, and how he had lent money, without interest, to many deserving people, every one of whom had regained his lost prosperity. He would be sure to assist Magoyemon in this way, and enable him to rebuild his house, and to restore his business. Sōbei added that as he was already acquainted with Sontoku he would accompany them and introduce them. Magoyemon laughed and said, "But professional money-lenders will not lend to me, even at a high rate of interest, so who would be foolish enough to let me have money for nothing? And if he were willing, be sure he would expect to make a profit out of me in some way, and I might be placed in a dangerous position." The two relatives were sceptical also, and Sōbei could not persuade them to visit Sontoku.

Shortly after this, however, Sontoku was sent by Lord Okubo to restore the village of Takematsu-mura, which lay about twenty-five miles from Ōiso. Sōbei now strongly urged his brother-in-law to take this opportunity of seeing Sontoku, and as the two relatives on this occasion gave the same counsel, Magoyemon was persuaded to visit Takematsu-mura.

So the four men went together and called at the headman's house, where Sontoku was staying. It was evening, and Sontoku was taking his bath, but he overheard Magoyemon saying that they had come to see him, and thinking that an interview would be useless, as Magoyemon was not really sincere in his purpose, he secretly left the bathroom and the house, and went to another village about five miles away. The headman and his family searched for Sontoku for some time, without success, and then told the visitors that he must have heard their voices and have gone away because he did not wish to meet them. Magoyemon was much surprised, and felt that Sontoku must have divined his insincerity and the selfishness of his motive. He asked the headman what Sontoku generally did in the village, and the headman replied, "He encourages the good, helps the poor, builds new houses, and mends old ones, opens waste lands, makes good roads, erects bridges, improves the irrigation, clears away stagnant pools, and does away with everything that is bad for the villagers and makes everything that is good for them. He works from early morning till late at night, and

never shuns any difficulties. So the villagers look upon him as their father." On hearing this reply, Magoyemon's surprise was changed into shame.

Next morning the search was continued, and at last Sontoku was found in the next village, but he refused to see his visitors. As they would not return home, however, and for several days continued their request for an interview, he at length consented to see them, only to say they must not disturb his work for the lord of Odawara, and as he had nothing to do with their private affairs they had better go back at once. As he said this with his great resonant voice, like the tone of a temple bell, the four men were overpowered and could at first make no response. Then Sōbei found courage to plead for his brother-in-law and ask Sontoku to give them the benefit of his advice. Sontoku's voice boomed forth again: "Magoyemon still seeks to justify himself and blame others. As soon as your wife heard my advice she put it into practice for her brother's sake. He himself is far inferior to her. He is selfish, desires to restore his house by the help of others, and is seeking

to revenge himself, though in so doing he will increase the enmity of others towards himself and will involve in utter ruin himself and his whole house. He does not want my advice. My way is to sacrifice oneself to save others, but his way is exactly opposite. Let him go home and hasten down the road of destruction; he must not defile my way by pretending to learn it." His voice was like thunder, and his countenance so stern that none of them dared to look at him, and Magoyemon trembled. Yet again Sōbei and Magoyemon begged him to have compassion on them. Then Sontoku's expression softened and he said, "Listen, Magoyemon: doing good produces good fruit and doing evil produces evil fruit. This is a fixed law and beyond dispute. Had you had any good in your heart at all, you would have helped the starving people in the time of famine. It was wrong for the mob to break into your house, but the real fault was your own: if you had helped them in time they would never have tried to injure you. But you justify yourself and blame others, and moreover you want to revenge yourself. The authorities put you in

prison to bring you to your senses and give you a lesson, but instead of being thankful to them for restraining you from further evil, you were indignant with them too. You sowed your seed and you were foolish enough to expect to reap fruit of a different kind.

"Yet if you now confess your guilt, fear Heaven, and bear your hardships with an equal mind, trying to help others, then shall this misfortune turn to good, and a way to build up your house again will open up of itself. You were formerly very wealthy, and though your house is now ruined you must have something left. As your money was the cause of your misfortune you must get rid of what money you have left, otherwise you will end in total ruin indeed."

As they had come to see Sontoku in the hope of borrowing money without having to pay interest, they were greatly disappointed as well as puzzled by Sontoku's paradoxical advice. Only Sōbei was pleased, his real reason in bringing Magoyemon having been to submit him to the direct influence of Sontoku's wonderful personality while listening to his peculiar doctrines. Sontoku continued,

"My way is for righteous men, and all hypocrites hate it. You men are simply concerned with present gain and loss: you cannot possibly walk in the way of righteousness, so get you back to your homes and act as you will."

But Magoyemon, moved in spite of himself, and willing to hear more of this strange teaching, said, "I should like to follow your valuable counsel, but how shall I dispose of my possessions?"

Sontoku replied, "Though the starving people broke into your house and destroyed your property, they are really your benefactors, because they crushed your avaricious heart and removed the cause of your former misdeeds. If you take this lesson to heart and repent and do good, this seeming misfortune will be the seed of future prosperity. Give, then, your remaining possessions to the poor of your town; tell them you were at fault not to help them in time of famine and that you are now repentant, in token of which you give all your remaining possessions to help the poor and needy; and add that you hope they will have compassion on you in your penitence and will accept your offering.

You must not keep back even a fraction for yourself, nor must you retain a trace of your ill-will towards any. If you act thus in complete sincerity, all will be well. I hear that you own a boat for carrying passengers from place to place; keep this, and the fares you receive will provide sufficient income for your daily needs. If you stoop now and bear adversity cheerfully, all these things will be the seeds of future prosperity. If, after following my advice, the people still bear ill-will toward you, and if your affairs do not prosper, then I will give to you the full amount of money you are now going to give away; so you need feel no anxiety as to the outcome."

With this offer the four men were as delighted as they were surprised; and Magoyemon, with many thanks for the advice and the generous promise of restitution, agreed to put Sontoku's plan into execution at once, and they returned forthwith to Ōiso.

On reaching home, however, their feelings were somewhat different from what they were when in Sontoku's magnetic presence, and the two relatives advised Magoyemon to wait, before putting the strange design

into practice, until they had consulted other members of the family. These two then left for the village of Uraga, twenty miles distant, in order to consult some relatives there: but before they reached their destination night set in and heavy rain began to fall. They came to a Buddhist temple where they often worshipped, and as they knew the priest in charge they thought they had better stay there for the night and complete their journey in the morning. To this priest, Tankai, they told the whole story of their visit to Sontoku, and said that they were on their way home to consult others before finally deciding what to do. The priest thought Sontoku's teaching extremely good, so when he heard that they wished to consult further he said, "How long have I been teaching you, and yet you cannot understand these precious truths, but must go and consult with others who know nothing of such things! How foolish you are! I will not allow you to stop here to-night. I cannot minister to your bodily comfort at the expense of your real welfare. Go back at once to Magoyemon." So the two returned forthwith to Ōiso and told Magoyemon what

Tankai had said, and he determined to adopt Sontoku's suggestion without more ado.

So Magoyemon sold all his remaining possessions and took the proceeds, about 500 *ryo*, to the mayor of the town, for the support of the poor, speaking as Sontoku had instructed him. The mayor was so surprised he did not know what to do, but he took the money and told Magoyemon he would consult his fellow-officers and let him know what they would do. The mayor accordingly laid the matter before his councillors. Some of them thought that, as they themselves were really to blame because they had taken part in the disturbance at the time of the famine, they deserved rather Magoyemon's anger than his gratitude, so they could not, for shame, accept the large sum of money. The mayor said, however, "Magoyemon gave the money with complete determination, and if we try to give it back to him he will certainly refuse it; so I think we had better accept it in the spirit in which it was offered. But instead of distributing it among the poor, let us keep it as a fund from which to lend money to those who are in need, without charging any in-

terest. That will not only be of great benefit to the poor, but it will also be a good way of perpetuating the kindness of the donor." All agreed to this proposal, and the fund was established. From that time all the town people had the utmost trust in and goodwill toward Magoyemon, and he was very happy. His business prospered, too, and his wealth increased from year to year.

Some time after, it chanced that the town of Ōiso was in need of a sum of money. Sontoku heard of this, and he suggested to Magoyemon that he should contribute toward the required sum. This Magoyemon gladly did, and he won the commendation of the Government and was greatly beloved by the people. For some time all went well with him; but gradually the innate selfishness of the man again began to gain the ascendency. He neglected Sontoku's teachings and set himself to amass a fortune. Sontoku warned him of the sure result, but he paid no attention. All his generosity ceased, and he thought only of himself, with the consequence Sontoku had foreseen—a fresh misfortune befell him, bringing him, this time, to utter ruin.

CHAPTER XXIII

ADVICE TO LORD HOSOKAWA

During the period of Tempo (1830–1844) Lord Hosokawa heard of Sontoku from his family physician, Genjun Nakamura. Lord Hosokawa was in very straitened circumstances, and had many debts which he was unable to pay, so he sent Genjun to Sakuramachi to get Sontoku's advice and assistance. Genjun secured an interview with Sontoku and told him of his lord's position. "The debts of my lord," he said in conclusion, "now amount to over 100,000 *ryo*, and his revenue is still decreasing. For a number of years another Lord Hosokawa—a relative—has been assisting him with money, amounting to over 80,000 *ryo* in all, but without relieving the situation. My lord has long been trying to effect a reform, but he has not been able to do so owing to the disputes and conflicting opinions among his retainers."

Sontoku replied, "I am sorry to hear of Lord Hosokawa's poor circumstances, because he is a kind-hearted and benevolent man, and though it is no part of my duty I will give you a word of advice. The original cause of your province's decline was the extravagance and financial recklessness of your master's house; then, instead of trying to amend matters by frugal living, you have sought to escape from your difficulties by borrowing money and raising the people's taxes, with the natural result that the people's poverty increased and your actual revenue diminished. The retainers became mean and selfish, quarrelling over petty gains and forgetting their duty to their lord, so that the province is now in a dangerous state. Helping you with money is like throwing gold into a purse with holes in it; but if you will all live frugally, strictly limiting your expenditure to a fixed sum, and rule your people with liberty and benevolence, you can, without difficulty, extricate your lord from his financial straits, and restore the province to prosperity. In the beginning there were no open fields in this country; there was no corn, much less money. Through

sheer industry the land was opened up and the foundations laid of the luxuriant fields you see to-day. If you work with the same spirit and on the same method, it will not be nearly so hard for you as it was for the pioneers of our country. In the present age of abundance and wealth you forget the hard work of our ancestors; you live in ease and luxury, and the natural result is ruin and disaster. Reform your habits altogether and return to the good old way of our forefathers —any other plan is useless. In this way I have restored Sakuramachi, and if your lord and all his retainers will unite in working hard towards the same end there is no reason why your province should not be restored to prosperity again. The disputes of the retainers are all caused through their lack of understanding the right method of working; now if you study the subject thoroughly, and show the retainers clearly the true way to restore your province to prosperity and content, and show them on the other hand the alternative methods which must lead to destruction, then ask them which way they will choose—not even rogues and knaves will dare to choose the

wrong way, but all will give their voice for the right. After such a decision the reform can be carried out and the people governed with benevolence, and the decision being unanimous none will venture, either from folly or from greed and indolence, to oppose."

Greatly pleased with Sontoku's scheme, Genjun returned and reported to his lord, who at once determined to put the plan into execution. Hearing this, Sontoku ordered Genjun to bring him all Lord Hosokawa's books of revenue and expenditure for the past ten years. These he examined carefully, and having calculated the average income, he fixed the proper expenditure for the present time of crisis. He next wrote out the causes of the rise and fall of a province, and directions for securing the welfare of the people. This occupied Sontoku about a month, and when completed he sent for Genjun and said, "Show these books to your lord and his retainers, and decide upon your course of action. The debts amount to 120,000 *ryo*, and the income is not sufficient even to pay the interest; but if you confine your expenditure strictly to the amount I have fixed, and if you look well after the

welfare of the people, the debts will in time be cleared away and your province restored to prosperity. Your lord's relative, the senior Lord Hosokawa, is very kind; he could not have done more for you than he has done. You should show him the books also, and tell him of your proposed reform. It will please him and may be helpful to you."

Here Genjun turned pale and said, "To tell the truth, my lord is not on very good terms with his relative, and will not communicate the reform to him. The two lords are descended from two brothers, Sansai and Okimoto, who lived about two hundred years ago. Sansai, the elder, succeeded his father, while Okimoto, a wild and lawless youth, was sent to a Buddhist monastery. He ran away from there, and having distinguished himself in an important military engagement, was brought to the notice of the Shogun, who determined to reward him with a province of 100,000 *koku* revenue. Sansai, however, jealously intervened, and as a consequence Okimoto's province was one of 16,000 *koku* only, though it was accompanied by the same title as that of the elder brother. From that

time there has always been enmity between the two houses. The younger branch has never forgiven that act of injustice, and though Sansai's descendant has helped us to the extent of over 80,000 *ryo* we have never thanked him, because of this long-standing feud, and now how can I possibly go to him and tell him of this reform?"

Sontoku replied, "I know the story of Sansai and Okimoto. Sansai was a great man and a good one. He used to love his retainers and his people even as his own children, and he gave the Shogun great help in bringing peace to the country. The welfare of the nation he considered before that of his own family; and knowing that if a large province were given to his brother—a brave man with the animal courage of a willing fighter, but reckless, selfish, and unfilial—he would but abuse the gift, bringing misfortune to his people and ultimate ruin and disgrace upon himself, Sansai advised the Shogun, for the country's peace and for Okimoto's own sake, to make the reward so small that no harm could be done with it. Only by thus having his power for evil limited was Okimoto's

house protected against himself, and Sansai was not his enemy but in reality his greatest benefactor. The stubborn and ungrateful spirit in which Okimoto's descendants have imitated their ancestor is the real cause of the present downfall. Now the two houses are separated by the ill-feeling on your part, but once they were sons of the same parents, and who can be more closely related than two brothers? This unkindness toward such a near relative is the greatest curse of your house, and if you do not try to alter this, your efforts to reform your province will be like trying to make the branches of a tree flourish while neglecting the roots. If you cannot cure this vital ill, all your other labours will be in vain. Tell your lord to repent and reconcile himself with his relative. Let him consider the kindness of Sansai and apologize for his past fault. The senior lord, who has been kind enough to help your lord so much in spite of the ill-will on your side, will be but too ready to forgive him, to forget the past, and to be as a brother again. This is the first and the fundamental reform; if you will not do this, but only try to reform other

matters, then I will have nothing more to do with you. Go back at once, now, and tell your lord all that I have said."

Genjun returned and showed the books to his lord, who read them carefully and greatly admired Sontoku's wisdom. Then Genjun told all that Sontoku had said about their attitude toward the senior house. Lord Hosokawa was deeply impressed, and as he considered Sontoku's words all the clouds that hung between them cleared away, and repenting his long hostility toward his relative he longed to apologize and to establish friendly relations with him and his house. He now invited all his retainers to study Sontoku's books on the scheme of reform, and finding them all agreed to assist him in the movement, he went, accompanied by his principal retainers, to his relative's house, and, sincerely apologizing for his past ungratefulness, he expressed his desire to be on the best terms with him for the future. Then Genjun produced the books of reform and explained them to the whole company. The senior Lord Hosokawa was much pleased with the scheme, and was extremely glad to be reconciled with the

younger house, after so many generations of hostility. Seeing that Sontoku, though a stranger, had so befriended the impoverished lord, he felt that he must, as a relative, do all that lay in his power to help forward the work of reform, so he offered a large sum of money for the purpose, and by this token of kindness firmly cemented the feeling of goodwill between the two houses. Thus the unpleasant feelings of two hundred years were dissipated for ever by a word of advice from Sontoku, to the great joy of all.

CHAPTER XXIV

HELPING LORD HOSOKAWA

After the event related in the last chapter, the junior lord wanted Sontoku to take charge of the work of reform in person, but Sontoku could not agree to do so without Lord Okubo's consent. Accordingly Lord Hosokawa sent his chief retainer to Lord Okubo and asked if he might be permitted to give Sontoku the trouble of reforming his province for him. Lord Okubo replied that he had no objection himself, but that Sontoku, though a retainer of his, was an extraordinary man who would do nothing which he thought wrong, even though his lord commanded it; if, however, Lord Hosokawa asked Sontoku's help in all sincerity, it was quite likely that he would accede to the request.

At the same time Sontoku asked Lord Okubo if he might help Lord Hosokawa in his distress; to which his lord replied that he

would be only too glad if Sontoku would improve the welfare of more people even if they were not his own subjects. Accordingly Sontoku gave several thousand *ryo* from the Sakuramachi treasury to Lord Hosokawa's reform fund, and sent an able man named Oshima, with a number of labourers, to inaugurate the new system. They opened up uncultivated places, improved the irrigation, lowering fields that were too dry and elevating such as were too wet. At the same time Oshima admonished the wicked and commended the good, rewarded the industrious and helped the poor, paying off debts among the villagers and repairing old houses—even building new ones; to some he gave farming implements, to others seed corn, giving to all according to their needs, and in every way seeking to promote the good of the people. The whole populace felt deeply grateful to their benefactors, and began to reform their habits. They worked diligently, and soon had many new fields opened up and brought under cultivation, thus producing an ever-increasing supply of rice and corn. Their lord's revenue was greatly increased, and he was able shortly

to pay back a large proportion of his debts. The benevolent government and the consequent prosperity of the Hosokawa domain attracted the attention and admiration of the neighbouring provinces.

A few years later Lord Hosokawa was promoted to an important office. He was much pleased with the appointment, and though he feared his new office would be very expensive, and that it might occupy so much of his time as to interfere with his conduct of the reform now progressing so satisfactorily, yet he felt that it must be accepted at all costs, and hoped that by fulfilling the new duties in as simple and economical a way as possible he might be able both to adequately perform his new and important obligations and to carry his reforms to completion.

Lord Hosokawa sent Genjun to tell Sontoku of his appointment, and of his determination to continue the work of reform while attending to the duties of his office. But Sontoku said, "Your lord's decision is quite wrong. How can he carry on two such labours without mutual injury to both? Men have often sacrificed their lives in fulfilment of their duty

to their lord, and much more should they be ready to sacrifice their interests merely. In the ordinary way a lord should devote himself to the welfare of his own people, but once he is called to the wider service of the general public his whole duty lies there, regardless of the cost to himself. If necessary stop your reform work and let the fund be used in the public service; nay, if the fund prove insufficient, your lord must not be afraid to incur debt in order to fulfil his public duties. This is in no wise contrary to our method of reform, but is the fulfilment of its spirit, however opposed it may outwardly appear."

Genjun was convinced of the truth of Sontoku's view, and thanked him for his high teaching, whereupon Sontoku promised that if the prosperity of Lord Hosokawa's province failed he himself would help them in good time. Genjun returned and told all this to his lord, who accepted Sontoku's opinion and followed his advice.

CHAPTER XXV

REFUSING TO ACCEPT REWARD FROM LORD OKUBO

In the seventh year of Tempo, during the great famine, there were a great many starving people throughout Lord Okubo's Daimiate, and in spite of all his efforts he could not help them all, there were so many. He sent a retainer to Sakuramachi to summon Sontoku to his assistance, but Sontoku refused to go, on the ground that he was too busy attending to the welfare of the people of his own district whom Lord Okubo had entrusted to him: he added that if the Daimyo wished to ask him anything he should come to Sakuramachi himself. The retainer was very angry at receiving this reply, and rebuked Sontoku for his insubordination; but Sontoku answered that he refused to leave, solely because he must perform the duty with which his lord had already entrusted him. The retainer returned to his lord in great indignation and told him

the result of his journey. But the lord said, "Ninomiya is quite right, and I was in the wrong. I should have told him all about the urgent need here, and then I am sure he would have come. Go back to him now and tell him that the people here are starving, and I beg him to come and help me to save them." So the retainer returned to Sakuramachi and gave his message to Sontoku, who at once promised to go to Yedo as soon as his relief work at Sakuramachi was finished. Lord Okubo was much relieved to know that Sontoku was coming, and said to his retainers, "Ninomiya has accomplished an extraordinary task, and that without accepting any remuneration from me. He would not even take any of my money to work with, but sacrificed all his own possessions, and then worked as surely no man ever worked before. He is truly a remarkable man. Now he is coming here to save our people from starvation; I want to give him some reward, though I know he will not be willing to accept anything. Still I must reward him somehow, or I shall not be doing my duty." So he ordered them to give Sontoku a higher rank and an allowance.

When Sontoku arrived Lord Okubo was ill, but he felt comforted to know that Sontoku was there, and he directed his retainers to bestow the reward upon him at once. The day before that fixed for conferring the rank upon him, Lord Okubo sent him a court dress to wear for the ceremony. When a retainer brought him the costume Sontoku was displeased, and said he had no use for such a dress. The retainer was angry at this, and said it was most impolite of Sontoku to refuse such a mark of special favour from their lord. Sontoku raised his voice and said, "It is not that I am ungrateful, but that the lord is wrong. At this time, when so many people are starving through no fault of their own, and even our lord himself cannot relieve them, but has sent for me to assist him, I had thought that his first act would be to consult me about the relief work, and to give me rice and corn to distribute to the needy. I did not come here to receive baubles. If I cut these garments into pieces and give them to starving people, will it help them? I have no time even to put on such a dress when the work among the poor people is so urgent. I cannot think of accept-

ing such a useless gift, so please return it to your master."

More angry than ever, the retainer returned to his lord and told how Sontoku had spurned the gift. On hearing his account of the matter Lord Okubo exclaimed, "What a truly great man! His words are judgments. I was altogether wrong. The dress shall not be given him."

The Daimyo then summoned Sontoku to his official house, but the latter refused to go, saying, "His lordship calls me to the official house; that can only be for the purpose of giving me some reward, while my only desire is to go straight to the starving people. How can I accept any reward for myself while there are so many starving persons who ought to be attended to at once? I will not go there, and if his lordship wishes to give me a reward let him grant me 1000 *koku* of rice. I do not want any for myself, but I can give it to the poor people and save many lives." Lord Okubo again approved Sontoku's words, and abandoning the idea of rewarding him, gave him 1000 *ryo* to use for the relief of the poor; he also gave him instructions to use the corn

stored in the granaries at Odawara, and the fund of money held in reserve there, as well. He added that he would like to have given Sontoku these orders in person, but owing to the serious nature of his illness he hoped Sontoku would excuse his communicating by messenger. Sontoku accepted his lord's orders thankfully, and sent him word that he would help the starving people at Odawara to the best of his ability, so he hoped his lordship would cease to worry about their condition. Having sent this message to his lord, Sontoku at once left Yedo for Odawara, travelling day and night.

CHAPTER XXVI

SAVING FORTY THOUSAND STARVING PEOPLE IN ODAWARA

The officials in Odawara had been doing their best to relieve the starving people, but their methods were not right, and they made little progress, spending many days in barren conferences. When Sontoku arrived, and, after telling them their lord's orders, requested them to open the granaries so that the starving people might be fed, the chief retainer objected that there was not sufficient corn in the granaries to feed so large a number of people, and besides, they had had no communication from the lord themselves, and could not open the granaries without his official order. Sontoku, in his most impressive voice, said, "There are tens of thousands of people here on the verge of starvation: our lord is deeply concerned, thinking about them day and night in spite of his serious illness,

and he is anxious that they should be relieved at once; while you, whose duty it is to look after the welfare of these people, and to keep your lord from worrying, waste your time in vain arguments, and are not truly concerned about the people's sufferings. If you let these people starve while you wait for your lord's order, how can you be fulfilling your duty? You should help the people, even without waiting for orders, and then if he were displeased with you for acting without instructions, you might bear his displeasure patiently, knowing that you had done your best. This is your clear duty under such circumstances. Yet even now, when I tell you your master's wishes, you say that you must await his official orders! If you do, several more days must elapse before a messenger can return from Yedo, and what are the starving people to do meanwhile? Half of them will be dead by that time. Is that the right way to look after your charge? You are indeed greatly mistaken. But your hearts are not in your work and it is useless to argue with you; so from to-morrow every one of you shall fast until you come to a definite decision about

succouring the people. So long as you eat sumptuously and live in ease, holding your conferences in luxuriously appointed rooms, you will never be able to understand what hardship means, and so you will never be able to really help the people. Now if you fast before discussing the state of the starving people, you will better understand their condition. So you shall all do this, and I too will fast with you."

Sontoku spoke with such force that his hearers were much impressed, and they at once decided to open the granaries. Sontoku immediately ran to the granaries and told the keeper to open them at once, but this he refused to do without an official order. "The case is so urgent," said Sontoku, "that I came here without waiting for the official order. This is no time for red tape, with so many people dying of starvation. If you will not open the granaries then you must fast with me." The keeper also was moved by this argument, and consented to open the doors. Sontoku then made arrangements for delivering the corn to the people, and he went himself about the district, directing the

distribution, and took no rest, even at night.

Just at this time Sontoku received word that Lord Okubo was dead. He was quite overcome by the news and wept, saying, "He was such a good lord, so benevolent and thoughtful of his people. For this kind lord and for his people I have been working, in spite of all kinds of difficulties, for over ten years: but alas! when my work is only half done, my lord has been taken away so suddenly and unexpectedly. How shall I look after the welfare of his people without his help?" He was quite unable to control his grief for a time, then he thought, "If I give way to my grief like this it will delay my work; and if I should thereby lose a single life, it will grieve the spirit of my lord. I must go on with the relief work at all costs, and carry out the benevolent plans of my lord." So he dried his eyes and pursued his task with unabated energy.

As in his own district, he divided the people of each village into three classes, "Needy," "Not Needy," and "Very Needy," and according to the class, he fixed the amount of corn

to be given to each family, and arranged that they should return the amount now given them within five years. For those who were too poor to repay their share within that time he decreed that their village should return it for them. When he found any in such extremities that they could not wait until they received their allowance of corn, he gave them some money so that they could buy something for their immediate needs: and to keep up their courage he told them they would soon receive plenty of food—for he knew that more persons died from fear than from actual lack of food. Some of the people had already been without food for many days, and were so weak that they could not thank their benefactor, but only shed tears.

In a few days Sontoku had supplied food to all the starving people, over 40,000 being fed. After this he set about distributing sufficient food to all for five months, that is, to last until the next wheat harvest; and thanks to his extraordinary energy and his unique power of organisation, not a single person died of starvation throughout the whole of Lord Okubo's territory. How grateful the

people were may be seen from the fact that not one person of the 40,000 who were helped, failed to pay back the corn they had received to the Government within the five years that Sontoku allowed them. It was remarked, too, that the character of the people improved greatly.

CHAPTER XXVII

ONE MEANS OF SAVING STARVING PEOPLE

One day the chief retainer of Odawara said to Sontoku that no man, however great his genius, could help starving people if he had not enough rice or money. "There are no insurmountable difficulties," replied Sontoku. "Whatever the circumstances in which men find themselves, there are always means of escape. The only trouble is that men lack the understanding or the strength of character to employ the necessary means."

The retainer asked him to explain, and Sontoku continued, "Is it not the duty of a lord and his retainers to look after the welfare of the people entrusted to them by Heaven? But they forget this, and live in ease and luxury, and when bad times come and the people suffer, the lord and his retainers cannot see that they are to blame, and they are at a loss what to do. Now, if

they are not able to relieve the hunger of their people they ought to repent, and, confessing their faults to Heaven, die starving. First of all the chief retainer should apologize to the people for his unthrift and his lack of care for them, and then starve himself to death. Then the head officials should do the same. Moved by such sincerity of conduct, the people would think that their distress must be due not so much to the fault of their chiefs as to their own past indulgence and consequent unpreparedness for the time of famine. Seeing their officials willing to meet death, they would feel that they themselves deserved no better, and they would thus lose all fear of starvation, and with their minds at peace they would feel encouraged and sustained. They would help each other in their need, and would cheerfully eat even the grass of the fields, the tender roots of which are sufficient to nourish the body in extremity, so that none would die. The death of famine-stricken people is largely due to their fearful minds, and to the spiritless surrender to circumstances which causes them to lose heart in the search for food, just as

men have died from the fear of impending calamity or of threatened disease. Thus the self-immolation of the chief retainer will destroy the people's fear of death and in consequence none will die. This, then, is the means of saving a starving populace when no other way is open, and there is nothing to feed them with."

The retainer was so surprised to hear this answer to his questions that he turned pale, but after a long silence he admitted that Sontoku's words were true.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HELPING THE PEOPLE OF ODAWARA

In the ninth year of Tempo (1838), the chief retainer of Odawara asked Sontoku to introduce his method of reform in the province of Odawara, and so secure the lasting welfare of the people. Sontoku consented and said, "The first step in reform is to limit expenditure. Let us find out the average outlay of the past ten years and make that the maximum limit of expenditure until the reform is complete. All the officials must practise frugality in their own households, and devote their savings to the help of the poor. If you will do that you can practise benevolence towards your people, and the reform will succeed, but if not, then all will end in failure."

Sontoku's directions were thus clear and precise, but many of the high officials did not like the method of beginning the reform with themselves, and benefiting the people at

their expense, so they requested Sontoku to put his reform in practice among the people first. This Sontoku declined to do, and even when the chief retainer promised that they would see to the limitation of expenditure in good season, he was by no means willing to comply; yet, as the retainers begged him importunately to commence the work of reform, and as it was the wish of the late Lord Okubo that he should undertake the work, he at length consented, and set out to begin the reform among the villagers.

The villagers were all delighted to have Sontoku among them, as they had previously been saved from starvation by him, and they came from all parts of the province to see him and to hear his teaching. In a short time the reform work was extended over seventy-two villages. The people worked harder and gave more generously to help their needy brethren, and the reform progressed so rapidly that every one praised Sontoku's great ability.

Still the officials had not begun to reduce their expenditure, but found all manner of excuses for not doing so, till at length Son-

toku said to them, "It is quite impossible to carry out this reform effectively unless you practise it among yourselves. To limit the expenditure of the officials is the foundation of a benevolent government, and when you attempt to benefit your people without restricting your own pleasures and luxuries you prove that you are wanting in sincerity and that you have no real love for the people. Now when these people heard of the reform they were very grateful, and they are now working harder than before, that they may contribute a larger revenue to the Government in token of their gratitude for your desire to reform them. You rejoice in the increase of revenue, making no sacrifices yourselves, and I am sure that the more the taxes grow the more avaricious you will become, then the strength and wealth of the people will begin to fail and consequently their circumstances will in the end be worse than ever. The aim of my reform is to establish the welfare of the people and not to encourage avaricious and selfish government, therefore I can help you no longer."

After that Sontoku left Odawara and re-

turned to Sakuramachi. Many of the retainers now argued in favour of Sontoku's proposal, but the chief retainer still refused to adopt it.

Meanwhile the people were much concerned over Sontoku's sudden departure. They feared that he had left them because of their own lack of sincerity, so they behaved remarkably well, working harder than ever, while many of them walked all the way to Sakuramachi to see Sontoku and beg him to return and teach them. All who came to see Sontoku he taught according to their various needs, and he continued his advice and instruction all day and far into the night. His teaching was so kind and so appropriate to each that many listened to him with tears in their eyes, and they would often forget to eat.

One day the chief retainer sent a messenger to tell Sontoku that a large and splendid official hall had just been completed, and he begged Sontoku to return to Odawara and take possession of this hall and continue his reform work. Sontoku replied that no official hall, however fine, was of any use to a reform unless the officials reformed themselves and

limited their expenditure—without this the building must decay and the work fail. And he flatly refused to return.

The people continued working very hard, following Sontoku's advice and doing all they could to carry out his teaching for the benefit of their fellow men. The wealthy contributed money to the reform fund, and even the poor added to it by working extra hours at night, while many who could not earn more sold their possessions for the same purpose. Thus they rejoiced in doing good and competed in helping the helpless, and the character as well as the condition of the people was greatly improved. Sontoku was much moved by what he heard of their progress, and in the winter of the tenth year of Tempo he went to Odawara and stayed for some time, doing his utmost to help and encourage the people day and night, even as a father would his children.

CHAPTER XXIX

REFORMING THE SHIMODATE DISTRICT

At the personal request of the lord of Shimodate, Sontoku consented to help him to extricate himself from his increasing difficulties and debts. To his chief retainer, Kamimaki, Sontoku said, "In a time like this, when your lord is in such difficult circumstances, all his retainers should live like the very poor and try to save the situation. But it is not enough simply to advise them to do this—you will merely excite protest and controversy. There is just one way by which you may induce them to adopt this mode of life and to bear all hardships without complaint or dissatisfaction."

Kamimaki replied that he would be pleased to employ this means if Sontoku would show him what to do. "You must resign your salary," returned Sontoku, "confessing that the whole distress of the district and of your lord's house is due to your mismanagement of

affairs, and expressing your desire to atone for your fault in this manner by adding the whole of your salary to the reform fund, and by devoting all your time and energy to the work of reform. The other retainers can then make no objection to some reduction in their salaries, and some will even follow your example, thinking it not right that they should receive any payment while the chief retainer is receiving nothing. They will bear hardships willingly, and their wives as well will submit to the changed circumstances for the sake of the community. Blame yourself and not others and you will accomplish mighty things; but try to persuade by arguments alone and the dissatisfaction of your associates will grow, the difficulties of your lord increase, and all your efforts be in vain."

The chief retainer was much impressed, and returning to Shimodate he at once resigned his salary and put into practice Sontoku's advice. Several of the other retainers promptly did the same, and when Sontoku heard this he was greatly pleased, and gave the impoverished retainers a supply of rice sufficient for their needs.

The retainers then fixed a limit of expenditure in accordance with the average revenue of the ten years preceding, but they had so large a debt that a considerable proportion of the income went merely to pay the interest on it. Sontoku saw that unless much of this debt was paid off at once it must be a very long time before the process of reform, however energetically carried on, could restore the financial condition of the province, so he offered to pay the lord's official expenses for the first two months of the coming year if the lord would ask his wealthy relative, Lord Ishikawa, to pay them for the four months, March to June, telling him all about the scheme of reform. Sontoku also promised to persuade eight rich men of Shimodate to meet the expenses of the two following months, July and August.

These proposals were successfully carried out. Lord Ishikawa was quite willing to help his relative in his reform, and eight other rich men gladly consented to lend their aid when they saw how much their lord was being helped by Sontoku, though a stranger. With the revenue of eight months thus saved, a large

part of the debt was paid off, and after that, each time the interest was paid on what remained, they were also able to pay back part of the principal, and thus the whole debt was cleared off in a few years. Then all the surplus revenue was devoted to the service of the people, and as the lord and all his retainers worked loyally together and closely followed Sontoku's instructions, it did not take long to complete the reform, to the great joy of all.

CHAPTER XXX

RESTORING THE SŌMA DISTRICT

The district of Sōma was once a very prosperous place, but owing to over-taxation it had gradually declined, until in Sontoku's time the state of its finance was exceedingly serious. At the suggestion of the chief retainer the lord made a great reform among the officials and did away with all unnecessary expenditure. With their savings they were able to help the poor according to their needs, to open up new lands and improve the irrigation, and they did everything they could to improve the condition of the people and to increase their productive power. They also invited immigrants from other districts, and assisted them to settle and to work in their province. The chief retainer led the way by his own example, and he was ready to lay down his life for the cause, if need were, so that any opposition which might have arisen among the retainers

was ashamed to show itself, and many creditors, moved by his enthusiasm and sincerity, remitted the interest due on their loans.

All went well for ten years. Then came the two famines of Tempo, in 1833 and 1836, and though not a single life was lost in the district, thanks to the great care of the officials, their savings were all spent, and they were reduced to their former straitened circumstances. At this juncture the chief retainer, an old man of seventy, Kusano by name, heard of Sontoku and his extraordinary ability. He was very much pleased, for he felt sure his hopes could yet be realised with Sontoku's help. He told his lord what he had heard, and a messenger was at once dispatched to Sakuramachi to ask Sontoku's advice for the reform of the province. Sontoku would not see the messenger, in spite of his repeated requests, but sent him home with a few valuable hints delivered through his secretary. "For," said he, "the lord of Sōma sent his messenger to try me, but he and his retainers have not much faith in me yet, and the time for me to help is not come. Besides, if I had seen the messenger he would have become enthusiastic in favour of my method,

and on returning home would have tried to communicate his enthusiasm to his superiors, but without success; his importunity would merely have brought him into trouble and he would have lost his place. The time will come when they will be more earnest and the chief retainer himself will come to hear my advice."

As Sontoku predicted, no notice was taken of the advice he sent, but some time later the chief retainer came in person. To him Sontoku explained that there are two sides to the government of a people, namely, giving and taking, and the just and the wise Government is a benevolent one, which thinks first of giving to the people and does not trouble much about taking from them; the wise Government will then win prosperity and peace, while the foolish Government, which thinks most of what it can get from the people, earns discontent and decline. Sontoku then proceeded to expound his method to Kusano clearly and at length.

Kusano returned to Sōma and told the other retainers about Sontoku's method, urging that it be put into practice; but many of his fellows

were opposed to it, as they doubted Sontoku's sincerity. The chief retainer pointed out that Sontoku's method of looking after his people was founded on the selfsame principle of love wherewith Heaven cares for all creatures, and that there was no trace of selfishness in it. Still the others would not accept it.

Then Kusano took some of the higher officials with him to see Sontoku. One of them asked him how he could manage to help the people of so many other provinces without neglecting Sakuramachi; to which Sontoku replied, "Production is unlimited. Rice and corn grow and increase year after year and will continue to do so for thousands of years. But the number of the poor is limited and decreases year by year. This is the reason why I can help the poor of other provinces too. Of course if we increase our expenditure as our income increases, we shall never be able to help others even if we get millions; but if lords live simply, as they are meant to do, they will have a surplus year by year and will always be able to help their poor, even as a spring can satisfy the thirsty to any number and at all times, and the spring

never suffers for the lack of what it has given away. If you care for the welfare of the people you provide a spring of benevolence; once flowing, it will not only benefit the people of one place but will overflow to refresh other places also, and will never stop."

Sontoku then explained the causes of a country's rise and fall, the true principles of government, how to improve a people's condition, with many other matters, and all so clearly that his hearers were greatly impressed and fully convinced. He now reviewed the old records of Sōma and wrote three treatises for them on the past, the present, and the future of Sōma, describing the causes of its decline and giving practical suggestions on how to remedy them for the future. These writings convinced all the retainers at home who had not seen Sontoku personally, and now none opposed his method of reform.

The officials selected the poorest and most backward village of Sōma, and asked Sontoku to start his reform work there, but Sontoku said, "The principle of my method is to guide and teach the bad by praising and rewarding the good; so first select the best of your

villages and commence your reform there. Do much for them and the bad villages will repent, and naturally try to follow the example of the good ones. This way of starting with the best district is not only the right way, but it is the easiest, quickest, and most economical as well."

The officials reconsidered the question, but many thought it was not worth while having the reform started in the very best part of the province, so they selected two villages well situated but in reality very bad ones, and here they asked Sontoku to begin. Sontoku made no objection, but he purposely refrained from starting his reform, alleging that he was at present too busy; for he knew well that the two villages chosen were not yet ripe for reform and the officials would waste much time and money there to no purpose if they began with them.

Now two other villages in the province were most anxious to have the reform carried out with them, and all the villagers contributed as much as they could afford to a reform fund, and a representative went to Sakuramachi and begged Sontoku to come and introduce his

reform methods. Such a sincere desire pleased Sontoku very much, and he at once helped them, with the result that the state of these two villages soon showed a remarkable improvement. Seeing this, scores of other villages followed their example, and, all contributing liberally to the reform fund, asked for Sontoku's help. The chief retainer was much pleased, and begged Sontoku to reform them all, but Sontoku replied, "When we have a great work to accomplish we must not be in a hurry. If in too much haste we cannot be thorough, and we shall only cause disappointment and dissatisfaction to the people, and all our efforts will end in failure. If we would walk a hundred miles we must go step by step; we cannot take several steps at once, much less hundreds of steps. So do not try to reach all the villages at once; select the best and practise the reform thoroughly, step by step. This is not only the surest but will in the end prove the quickest way."

So, gradually and steadily, the reform work extended. Many a poor village whose inhabitants were of the worst character was converted into a place of material prosperity

and of high moral tone. Many of the people, after themselves profiting by the system, were moved by gratitude to give their labour for the assistance of others and the benefit of their lord. Seeing the splendid results, Sontoku said to others, "When a lord is good and loves his people the people also are good and serve their lord well. A lord and his people are like an object and its reflection. Now, the worst characters in Sōma have been changed into people of the finest type. Directly they experienced their lord's benevolence and love, all their good qualities were aroused and developed, and they even tried, out of gratitude, to do more than could be expected of them. There is some good in every man's heart, and few people are so bad that they cannot be converted. This has shown itself to be true of these villagers, and it must be true of the people of every country on earth."

In the course of ten years a large part of the reform in Sōma was accomplished. The expense of helping the poor all over the province during this time was very heavy, but as the lord and his retainers never exceeded the fixed limit of expenditure, and continued

to live simply while the revenue increased year by year, so the more they used the fund for the poor the more the fund seemed to grow, as if fed by an inexhaustible mine. As the revenue had now very greatly increased, Sontoku did as he had promised ten years before—he raised the limit of expenditure a little, fixing it at the new sum for the next ten years, when it might be again raised. The retainers were all well pleased with this reward for their long term of economy.

Sontoku reminded the lord and his retainers that if they continued in the way they were going, they would soon be able to help the people of other provinces in addition to their own. Success or failure, he said, did not depend upon outside things, but entirely on their own minds, and all their past achievement would vanish like a burst bubble if at any time they should change their minds, and, neglecting the service of the people, seek their own ease and comfort in luxurious living.

The lord and his retainers continued to follow Sontoku's advice most strictly, and the reform proved a splendid success, so that they were able to contribute large sums of

money to help the cause of reform in other provinces. Not a little of this success was due to the lord himself. When he was young he was given the training of a son of the poor, in order that he might learn to rule with sympathy for his subjects; so he understood all their needs and their difficulties. Thus he was able to lead his retainers in the reform by his own example, and he loved his people deeply, mixing with them and sharing their burdens. If any of his officials did anything wrong he did not punish or dismiss them, but taught them kindly until they repented, and then he trusted them again.

CHAPTER XXXI

SONTOKU'S SCHEME FOR CONSTRUCTING A DIFFICULT CANAL

In the 13th year of Tempo (1842) the Central Government decided to open a canal through Imba-numa, a vast marsh, and ordered experts to survey the route and send in plans and estimates of construction. Sontoku was one of the number who received the order. The length of the proposed canal was about fifteen miles, and as the route traversed a wide, deep marsh and a mountain of solid rock, the construction promised to be exceedingly difficult. After many days spent on the work the surveyors sent in their plans and estimates, but Sontoku sent no report at all. An official therefore went to see Sontoku and asked his opinion of the proposed work. Sontoku said, "No amount of money or labour will construct this canal unless we set about the work in the right way; but if we set about

it properly there is no work too difficult to accomplish." The official then inquired what would be the right way, and Sontoku replied, "The right way to begin is to improve the condition of the people in the neighbourhood of Imba-numa."

"It is not about the people I want to hear," objected the official, "but about the construction of a canal."

"And who are to build the canal," asked Sontoku, "if not the people living there? I studied the people, and I found them indolent and self-indulgent, therefore poor and avaricious. If such men are employed they will think more of getting money than of doing their work well, and as the work is necessarily very difficult we should, with such workmen, spend a great deal of money with very little result. If, however, the Government begins by benevolently helping the people to get rid of their difficulties and improve their condition, then they will prove able workmen and with grateful and contented hearts will work with all their strength. Impelled to their labour by gratitude and sincerity, nothing will be too hard for them, and the success of the

undertaking will be sure and lasting. It seems a round-about way to build a canal, and it may take many, many years, but it will prove the quickest way after all."

The official thought Sontoku's plan a very good one ; but as the task was likely to prove even more difficult than had been anticipated, the idea of making the canal was finally abandoned.

CHAPTER XXXII

SONTOKU'S WORK IN MAOKA

In the fourth year of Kokwa (1847) Sontoku was appointed Secretary to the Governor of the district of Maoka. He was ordered to open up some of the wild land of the district, and as there was no public fund available for the purpose he used his own money. His operations were most successful, and the other officials became extremely jealous, finally threatening to resign in a body unless his activity was checked. The Governor, surprised to see how matters stood, summoned Sontoku to the official house, where he rebuked him before the other officials in an offensive and insulting manner. Sontoku at once perceived the Governor's baseness and the mean envy of his fellows, but realising that if he made the facts of the case public by way of justifying himself the Governor would be sure to lose his place, he calmly accepted the blame and apologized for his conduct.

Though he recognised the futility of working along with a Governor and officials so selfish and stupid, Sontoku knew that if he resigned his position hundreds of thousands of innocent people who were now progressing so well under his guidance would lose their way and relapse into their former condition ; so he put up with their folly and bore all things patiently. His home was an old temple whose ruinous walls and broken roof admitted the wind and rain, and here he lived in the utmost simplicity, gathering about him a large number of young men who listened to his teaching. One stormy day in midwinter a retainer from Shimodate visited him. The wind whistled through the chinks and the snow drifted down on their heads as they sat conversing, and when he left the house the retainer ran to the Governor in a great fury and scolded him roundly for treating Sontoku so badly. When the retainer had gone, the Governor, thinking Sontoku had been complaining, sent for him and rebuked him for finding fault with his residence. Sontoku replied that he was sorry that the retainer had taken it upon him to make complaint, for he was

quite content himself; though his house was somewhat dilapidated and his living of the simplest, they were far too good when compared with what many of the poor of the district had to endure.

The welfare of the poor he regarded as his special concern, and when any of his visitors advised him to repair the leaks in his roof and walls he would say that he had no time to spare for such things while the care of the poor needed all his attention.

The Governor at length decided to get rid of Sontoku, and was preparing a report to the Central Government denouncing Sontoku and his system as equally useless. A disciple of Sontoku's, hearing of this proposed report, interviewed the Governor in much indignation, explaining the benefits of Sontoku's methods and disposing of all the pretended objections. When finally the Governor had no answer left to his arguments save that his own position might be in danger if Sontoku were allowed to remain, the young man's anger flamed forth. "What folly," he exclaimed, "to waste words in discussing such a question with a man whose only concern is in keeping his position and its

salary and who cares nothing for his service to his lord and his people! Had I known sooner that you were a man of that stamp I should have saved my breath." And he went back to the temple and told Sontoku what had happened. Sontoku was much displeased, and rebuked him for his presumption. Then all his disciples understood that he bore insults and impositions for the sake of the people, and that his meek forbearance was the only means which would enable him to continue his work; and all marvelled at the largeness of his mind and the depth of his concern for the people.

Soon after this, however, Sontoku's patience and forbearance at last overcame the meanness of the Governor, and he commended Sontoku's work to the Central Government. The Government thereupon praised Sontoku and presented him with a large sum of money, which he was very glad to accept for use among the poor.

Two of the villages in this district were always quarrelling over their water-supply, and the Governor asked Sontoku to try and settle the controversy. He at once commenced

building waterworks to increase the supply. The villagers ridiculed the attempt, which seemed to them impossible, but in a surprisingly short time the system was complete, with more than sufficient water for both the villages. The long-standing hostility between the two places at once disappeared; the inhabitants began to work harder, and were soon much better off than before.

Sontoku was asked why the two villages, which had for so many years cherished ugly feelings towards each other and been so quarrelsome, suddenly not only dropped their ill-will but were each anxious that the other should have more than its share of the water. "The ill-will of the villagers," replied Sontoku, "was not natural to them, but arose out of the scarcity of water, for which they contended; and when this cause of their hard feelings was removed, the hard feelings also vanished, and peace and goodwill reigned instead, without any instruction. Their poverty, too, which was caused by their lack of water, was responsible for their quarrelsomeness, for there are few things more conducive to mean, cold hearts than dire poverty.

"The lack of water," he continued, "was not really due to the small quantity available, but to its waste and abuse—and this you will find to be true in all cases of poverty. There is destitution, not because there is not food and wealth enough for all, but because there is so much waste and abuse of wealth and food. If both rich and poor lived within their means, and wasted nothing on useless vanities, there would be ample food for all, even as those two villages have plenty of water now that we have rebuilt the dam and stopped all waste."

CHAPTER XXXIII

SONTOKU'S WORK IN NIKKŌ AND HIS DEATH

In the sixth year of Kayei (1853) the Government instructed Sontoku to reform the district of Nikkō. Though he accepted the charge he felt that he would not live to complete the undertaking, so he called some of his trusted disciples and instructed them how to carry on the reform after his death. Sontoku seemed in no hurry to commence the work, however, but continued to receive officials from various parts of the country and give them instructions for the reform of their own provinces, so that his disciples began to wonder whether he really intended to go to Nikkō at all. Then he fell ill—as the result of overwork, the doctors said. After about ten days he recovered sufficiently to resume his work, receiving visitors and giving lectures as before, though he was still very weak. A month later he

had finished his preparations for starting to Nikkō. He was still far from strong, and his friends tried to dissuade him from the journey, fearing that such arduous labours in the heat of the summer would be too much for him, and the doctors had warned him that another attack might prove fatal; but Sontoku insisted that he must start at once, so he left his home and climbed the steep roads to the mountainous district of Nikkō. On his arrival there the chief official, observing his weakness, asked him to go about his duties in a sedan chair. Sontoku declined, however, saying that he would not be able to study the condition of the people sitting in an easy sedan chair, and besides, his discomfort was as nothing compared to the unhappy lot of many of the poor people there. So he walked from village to village, everywhere studying the records of the past as well as the present state of the place, until all the circumstances of each village became quite clear to him. The roads were often very rough and steep, and frequently crossed over high mountains; some of the villages lay in the valleys and some on the mountain tops, with long distances—not less

than ten miles at times—between; it was the hottest season of the year, and in his enfeebled condition he found these long walks very trying, and was often obliged to sit down by the wayside or to lie down on the grass in a state of utter exhaustion. Yet in spite of his weakness and his sixty-seven years he would not desist from his labours, thinking only of his duties and the distress of the people entrusted to his care, and forgetting his own weakness and ill-health.

In every village he taught the people to love one another, and persuaded them of the nobility of work; he helped them to make better roads, to improve their irrigation, to open up new fields, and to amend their condition in various other ways; to widows and orphans and other helpless persons he gave money, from one to five *ryo* according to their need; he commended the good and diligent, sometimes giving ten or fifteen *ryo* to the specially worthy in industrious villages, by way of encouragement to them and incentive to others.

When the news had first reached Nikkō that Sontoku was to be sent there, suspicious

people said that his real object was to find new sources of revenue for the Government, so that their taxes might be increased, and many of these fearful persons joined together to devise means of preventing his reforms. As month after month passed and Sontoku did not appear they came to the conclusion that he was not coming at all, and their plans were abandoned for the time. Then quite unexpectedly Sontoku came, taking them by surprise at last, and before the opposition could be revived and brought to bear upon him, his fatherly kindness had its effect—suspicion was turned into gratitude, and envoys sought him from all parts of the district, begging him to visit their villages. When these facts came to the knowledge of his disciples, they understood the reason for Sontoku's delay in starting for Nikkō, and also why he had at length started so suddenly and then kept at his work so continuously and energetically notwithstanding his weakness; and they marvelled afresh at his wisdom and foresight.

The district of Nikkō was so poor that Sontoku contributed several thousand *ryo* which he had been keeping for the service

of the poor, and gave also all the money sent him from time to time by the lords he had formerly helped. In a few years many wild places had been reclaimed and the production of the district was greatly increased, so that, as the Government did not raise the taxes, the condition of the people was vastly improved, and all became worthy and industrious citizens.

END OF THE "HŌTOKUKI."

Postscript by the Translator

In the third year of Ansei (1856) Sontoku passed away, in the 70th year of his age, at the official house at Imaichi, Nikkō. He had instructed his friends and followers that no tombstone was to be erected to his memory, though if they wished to mark the place of his burial they might raise a small mound of earth.

His work at Nikkō was carried on by his son and his disciples, and was brought to com-

pletion twelve years later, in the first year of Meiji; and many other districts and villages have been reformed by his followers since his death.

In the fourth year of Ansei, Kōkei Tomita, Sontoku's greatest disciple, wrote an account of his life and work, and called the book *Hōtoku-ki* — literally, "A Record of the Return (Repayment) of Virtue." The lord of Sōma sent a copy of this book to the Emperor, who was so pleased with it that he had it printed and widely circulated among his officials. It has recently been republished by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, and is now read all over Japan, and the good it has done in that country is incalculable.

How great is the influence of a good man who seeks not his own glory but the will of Heaven, and who works in the service of God!

APPENDIX

SONTOKU'S TEACHING AND HIS RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Sontoku said one evening to his disciples, "When people are in extremity and do not know where their next meal is coming from, they go out to beg some food; but at such a time they do not think of washing up their soiled dishes. This is wrong. Washing dishes is not to be done merely that they may be used again; it is also an act of gratitude for the service they have given. Though he have nothing more to eat, let a man clean his dishes and then starve, for he owes something to the dishes for having been useful to him when he had a use for them."

This spirit of remembering kindnesses and making some return for the many benefits received, so far as this lies within our power, is a prominent feature of Sontoku's teaching —so much so that it is known as "Hō-toku-

kyo"—the teaching of returning virtue for virtue. "We owe our life and its preservation and enjoyment," Sontoku once said, "first to the benefits received from Heaven and Creation, then to those we receive from our sovereign, our country, our parents, and other sources innumerable. We have laws and social obligations which compel us to return, in some degree, the benefits received from parents, sovereign, and country; but there are no laws obliging us to render thanks by our actions for the great benefits bestowed on us by Heaven, therefore men are prone to neglect and to forget this their first duty. Some indeed remember, but generally they think it enough to show their gratitude by ceremonies of worship and thanksgiving, and not by deeds. This should not be so. We must bear in mind the will of Heaven, and try to cultivate our Heaven-sent virtues and sincerely and earnestly work to promote the progress and development of all Creation."

Kōkei Tomita analysed Sontoku's teaching into four principles:

1. Its Foundation—Sincerity

Even as God is sincere.

2. Its Principle—Industry

   Even as Heaven and Earth and all Creation are ever at work without repose.

3. Its Body—Economy

   To live simply and never exceed one's rightful means.

4. Its Use—Service

   To give away all unnecessary possessions, material or other, in the service of Heaven and mankind.

When his disciples asked Sontoku what were his religious beliefs he replied, "My religion consists of one spoonful of Shintoism, and a half-spoonful each of Buddhism and Confucianism." The following extracts from one of his sermons will throw light on this point, as well as on his teaching of "Hō-toku":—

"Some Buddhists preach that this world is only a temporary abiding place and therefore the next world is all-important. There is truth in this, yet it is a mistake to make too little of this life. The fruit of a tree is all-important, yet if the tree would bear good fruit in the autumn it must first put forth its

leaves in the spring and drink the rain and dew, it must spread its roots beneath the soil to draw nourishment from the earth, it must breathe in the air of heaven by night and day, and must withstand the shocks of wind and torrential rains. Thus it has to work hard and ceaselessly, and the beautiful flowers it bears now are promise of the sweet fruit which mark the end and the reward of all its labour. So is it with men; if we wish for our own welfare and happiness in the next world, we must be good in the present world. We must always be on the watch to follow the right path and to do good. How can men who choose the wrong path and do evil expect to go to the better world? Hell is the place for wicked men as Paradise is for the good; our state in the next world will be the result of this, so we must be watchful now. . . .

"Life itself is the expression of the Will of Heaven; we are what we are now owing to the Will of Heaven and the care of our parents. Let us remember this, and do what we can to render thanks to Heaven, and to return the kindness of our parents. It is

our duty to go the right way, according to the Will of Heaven, and if we go on in this right way, performing our duties well, it is beyond doubt that we shall enjoy peace and rest in the world to come. . . ."

Some short poems written by Sontoku will perhaps throw more light on his beliefs.

"Ere time began
The world was not, nor man;
God reigned alone,
The Heavens His Throne."

"Dead leaves
Conceal the Old Path;
Sweep them away and see
Lo! the footprints of God."

"This brief abode of clay
To Him Who framed it and Who rules it still
I dedicate, and pray
'Bless all Thy creatures frail, and guard from ill.'"

"The love for one's own child
Which Nature gives to each
That wider Law of Love
The Path of Right, doth teach."

"In simple faith the fearless mind
Yearns for the Future still unknown;
Doth not the Father of mankind
Reign on His everlasting Throne?"

Sontoku's beliefs were simple and even

vague as to outward form; one thing is sure, however, that the God of Sontoku was far above the modern god made out of the residue of fire, and that he was much nearer to God, and knew His truth better, than many so-called believers who cry, "Lord! Lord!" but deny and reject Him in their lives.

THE "HŌTOKUSHA"

(*Society for Returning Virtue*)

"Men who wish to render thanks to Heaven by benefiting mankind as much as they can; men who wish to reform villages in order to help the poor; men who wish to sow the seeds of goodness that they may enjoy its lovely flowers and noble fruit; of such men does the 'Hōtokusha' consist." So wrote Shōkei Fukuzumi, a great disciple of Sontoku.

This Hōtokusha ("Society for Returning Virtue") was organised by Fukuzumi according to Sontoku's instructions, and consisted of a Central Society and many branches which have since spread all over Japan. The central organisation was on the principle of Son-

toku's Hōtoku office, or "Hōtoku Yakusho," as it was called, of which Sontoku said, "The spirit of the Hōtoku office, if pictured, would be like an august deity shedding a holy light and filled with love and compassion for the common people. No other picture would do justice to its subject."

The purpose of the Hōtokusha is to help the poor and to aid them to unite in helping one another, first by opening their hearts and developing goodness of character among them, and secondly by assisting them to open up wild lands, improve irrigation and roads, repair bridges and river banks, and, in general, by doing all that is of benefit to the poor. It begins by helping the poorest and encouraging and rewarding the good. The function of the Central Society is to give financial help as well as advice to the branches, so its members are well-to-do persons who freely give their money and services in order to show their gratitude to Heaven by helping their fellow men, and they expect no material reward for themselves.

The Branch Societies consist of poorer men who pay a small subscription known as the

"Nikkwa-sen" or "Daily Subscription Money," laying aside from day to day a certain amount of their regular earnings, or the product of extra labour, though it be but a farthing a day, to be paid in to the Society monthly. The money thus subscribed by the poor, together with money received from the Central Society, forms a fund from which loans are made to members requiring capital for sound productive enterprises, such as improving their trade or industry. No interest is charged, because the purpose of the Society is to help the needy. Sontoku once compared the virtue of lending money, without interest, to the sun. "When the sun rises industry awakes. Officials take up their duties, farmers till their fields, merchants buy and sell, and all men work at their various employments. So when money is lent without interest farmers who were sitting idle for lack of implements set to work on their farms, merchants who were lying asleep because they had no money to buy goods get up and open their shops again, the weak become strong, and the poor become rich. The sun rises and sets daily and corn grows, trees blossom, fruit ripens, and in

365 rounds of the sun all the needs of man are satisfied. Even so is the virtue of money lent without interest—farmers and merchants prosper, and the idle become industrious."

Zenshukin, "Seed-of-goodness Money," is a fund formed from occasional contributions of members, and is employed in charity and various public benefits. The following extracts from an old cashbook of a branch indicates the source of such contributions:—

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ZENSHUKIN

Yen.	Sen.	
3	0	Amount saved by economising expenses on marriage ceremony of donor's son.
9	50	Proceeds of sale of unnecessary clothing in donor's family.
5	0	Share of profit from keeping pigs.
2	0	Proceeds of sale of three trees planted for the purpose five years ago.
1	25	Amount saved by economising in travelling expenses.
0	75	Amount saved by giving up drinking *sake*.
0	37	Amount realised by selling pipes and tobacco, donor having given up smoking.
0	25	Proceeds of night work making rope.
0	65	Proceeds of sale of a silver hair-pin.

The Hōtokusha is virtually a Co-operative Credit Society founded with a high moral purpose, and it has proved a great boon to the poorer classes of people. Its organisation

at the present time is not precisely the same as at its inception, having been more or less modified to meet the changing circumstances of the times and the various needs of different localities, but in spirit and in general principles it remains as it was at its origin.

It is not details of organisation which matter, however, so much as the individuality of the leaders, and it goes without saying that only a Sontoku or a Fukuzumi could hope to see his labours crowned with such glorious results as theirs. With a leader of the right spirit and ability, who works with a deep-rooted conviction that he is called to this work, who is moved as well by the sense of dedication to the service as by a realisation of the great privilege of toiling for the welfare of the poor —with such a leader a Hōtokusha cannot but succeed and prove a blessing to the poor, in any country and in any age.

SONTOKU'S CHARITY ORGANISATION

Why did Sontoku's method of charity organisation always meet with complete success?

First because he gave all his sympathy when helping any one. He once said to a friend,

"The hardships I experienced in childhood were imprinted on my soul and engraved on my bones, so I can never forget them, and I work the harder in the hope that I may serve as many as possible of those who are sinking beneath the burden of adversity." Thus his works of charity were all built on the right and true foundation of keen and deep sympathy.

Secondly, Sontoku was sincere and earnest in helping the poor. He did not believe in bestowing alms from the depths of an easy-chair or in pitying the poor while he indulged in all life's luxuries. He lived the life of the poor and shared their burdens; there was at no time any contrast between his own life and the lives of those he served, nor was there contradiction between his teaching and his way of living. To a village headman who sought guidance in the conduct of his village he said, "To restore a village to prosperity and reform the people it is necessary to give money—but there is a wrong as well as a right way to give. Money is useless if the receiver be not moved by the benefit he receives. There are many good men in the world, but there are few who can restore these decadent villages,

because they do not take the right way of doing it. Generally speaking, those who undertake such work are wealthy, they are good, and they give generously, but as they live in ease and luxury the recipients of their bounty are not moved by a generosity which costs the giver nothing—they may but envy the comfortable circumstances of their benefactors, and the money, lightly given and lightly received, is often spent in feeble imitation of that affluence they envy, not for necessaries nor to any lasting advantage, and the final result of such alms is loss and harm. If you would benefit your people, live humbly and simply, and devote the whole surplus of your income to the service of your village and villagers. Then all will be touched by the sincerity and earnestness of their benefactor, there will be no cause for envy, and no temptation to abuse the gifts they receive; they will find no hardship in plain food, cheap clothing, and hard work, but will find pleasure in the simple life when their headman shares it with them. Believe me, unless you do this you will never reform your villagers nor improve your village."

Thirdly, there was no extravagance and no waste in Sontoku's methods.

Shōkei Fukuzumi, who travelled much with Sontoku, speaks of his system thus: "Sontoku gave generously and promptly to all who were unable to work—too old or too young or too weak—and he helped freely those who were industrious and worthy of help. But to those who were poor either from laziness or owing to some bad habit, such as drinking or gaming, he never gave money. He would preach to them patiently, exhorting them to repent of their bad habits and reform, and would promise that if they worked hard at their trade or calling he would buy the product of their labour and give them more than the market price for it. To those who knew no handicraft he offered employment at some outdoor labour, such as making roads, reclaiming wild land, digging irrigation ditches, elevating wet fields, &c., and promised them higher wages than the customary rate. His earnest preaching, accompanied by such practical and encouraging proposals of assistance, proved most successful. The lazy were encouraged to become industrious, the unskilled were trained into skilled

labourers, the weak were helped to grow strong. Many indeed were those in whom Sontoku thus engendered the habit of industry and a love for work."

In this way Sontoku got the maximum result from the minimum cost, and every penny he spent for the poor was spent so as to yield its full value; there was no waste, and all the people helped received real and lasting benefit. The fact that Sontoku lived constantly among the poor and associated with them, learning all their circumstances and the working of their minds, was no doubt the source of that insight which enabled him to help them so wisely as well as promptly.

Lastly, Sontoku's resources for purposes of charity were perennial, for he did not employ a surplus, merely, after all his own desires were satisfied, but by living simply and economically he saved money daily for charity. "I put so much importance," he said, "on limiting one's expenditure and living simply, below one's income, because once we practise this rule we shall always, without trouble, have money in hand, more or less according to circumstances, to give away to others.

If we simply give away money for which we have no use, the supply will soon be exhausted, like drawing water from a pot; however large the pot may be, sooner or later the water must be exhausted. But giving money from one's daily savings is like drawing water from a well, the supply of which can never fail."

Sontoku's method could be practised by rich and poor alike. To the rich Sontoku preached that they ought to live simply and regularly, limiting their expenditure and then giving away the remainder of their income for the benefit of their poor relatives, friends, district and country; that it was their mission to help the poor, and that to give in charity was to increase the blessings of Heaven on themselves, and the more they gave away the more richly would they receive. To the poor he taught that charity was not a virtue to be practised by the rich alone, but for every one; that they must save something to-day for to-morrow, this year for next year, something for their children, something for their relatives, something for others poorer than themselves, however little the something

their income would admit. "It is not a man's way," he added, "but a beast's, to consume all one has and take no thought either of the morrow or of the wants of others."

To Daimyos he preached that they should live within their rightful means and give away what they could save for the benefit of the people entrusted to them by Heaven, and that the way of charity was the way to prosperity and peace, while the way of greed and severity was the way to discord and ruin. To his disciples he taught that giving up for the sake of others is the crown of ethics, and that this means not only giving up material things but sharing also one's success and honours and other immaterial riches.

Thus Sontoku never ceased preaching the truth and blessedness of giving for the service of others, at the same time urging his hearers to limit their expenditure so that they might have a living and inexhaustible source from which to give. How much Sontoku's followers owed to this invaluable and practical advice! If kind men and women of to-day would but follow this advice of Sontoku's, what wonderful good would result for the beautifying

of society and the betterment of mankind! Among various and large wastes of charity to-day, perhaps none is greater than the waste of good wishes of kind people, who would gladly give something in the service of their poorer neighbours if only they could afford to do so. If these kind people would only follow Sontoku's plan to so cut down and regulate their expenditure that they would always have a certain balance remaining for purposes of charity, how easily, then, and how often could they ensure the practice of their generous impulses. Besides, what such practice of the divine law of love would mean to the givers themselves! and what a foretaste of the joys of Heaven! True, some self-sacrifice is involved, but the greater the sacrifice the greater the result; and it is by such sacrifice that they will see an answer to their prayer, "Thy Kingdom come."

Founded on such deep sympathy, his sincerity so eloquently and beautifully expressed in a life of complete self-sacrifice; directed by such practical wisdom in the dispensation of charity, learned not from books but from personal experience in the lives of the poor;

with funds derived from a never-ending and inexhaustible source—is it to be wondered at that Sontoku's charity work proved always so great a success?

SONTOKU'S PREACHING

Sontoku used to preach every day, generally in the evening, and often up to midnight; he never sought nor desired a large audience, so most of his discourses were addressed only to his disciples—often over a hundred in number during his latter years—and on one occasion, when all his disciples ran away because some ruffians had threatened to kill them all with their master, Sontoku continued preaching to the members of his family only, as earnestly and impressively as though to a large gathering. His preaching Sontoku considered a very important feature of his work, and once, when he was ordered by his lord to open up some wild land, he said to his disciples, "My wish is to open up the wilderness of men's hearts, to sow therein the Heaven-given seeds of goodness, to cultivate charity, righteousness, wisdom, and gen-

tleness, and to reap therefrom a harvest of good fruits. Opening one wild heart is better than opening up a large area of wild land."

Sontoku's preaching was never wordy, but to the point always, and illuminated by apt illustrations. Once a village teacher, who was being helped by Sontoku, got drunk and behaved in public in a disorderly manner. One of his pupils, who had seen him in this state, stopped attending his classes; and the teacher, much distressed, came to Sontoku and begged him to persuade the pupil to return, saying, "No doubt I committed a great fault, but what I teach is from the book of the Sages, and it is not right that he should forsake the study of the Sages because of my ill behaviour." But Sontoku said, "If we boil clean rice and put it in a dustbin the rice may still be clean and good, but who would care to eat it except the dogs? Your case is like that. Your learning is good, but you yourself are like the dustbin, and pupils quite naturally refuse to come to you. Of what use is all your learning? If it is for nothing but to earn you a living, you had better become a farmer or a shop-keeper." The teacher

was thoroughly ashamed, and reformed his conduct altogether.

With those whose habits were too deeply confirmed and whose hearts were too hard to be reached by words, Sontoku sometimes resorted to strange but effectual devices. There was in one of Sontoku's districts a notorious gambler who, with a band of a hundred followers in the same profession, gave Sontoku much trouble in his work of reform. One day Sontoku called at the gambler's house and asked his wife—a self-indulgent, luxurious, and idle woman—to spin some thread for him, The woman at first refused, though Sontoku offered her double the market price for her work; but he came again and renewed his request, and at last, after much persuasion, she consented. As she was so well paid, and Sontoku's desire for the thread seemed insatiable, she ended by becoming interested in the work, and continued to spin until she had saved no less than 50 *ryo*. When the gambler and his wife discovered that Sontoku had no real need for all this thread they began to understand that his motive was simply to encourage them in habits of thrift, and that

he hoped to cure the man's gambling propensity through his wife; and, in fact, this end was eventually attained through Sontoku's silent yet eloquent preaching.

Very often Sontoku reformed people by coupling good counsel with material help. A certain Genkichi, a mattress maker, who was very fond of drink, very idle, and consequently very poor, called on Sontoku at the end of the year and asked for a loan of some *mochi* rice that he might make himself some of the *mochi* cakes to eat on New Year's Day in accordance with the custom. But Sontoku said, "How can you hope to eat *mochi* at this season just like those who have been industrious throughout the year and have earned money to buy it? New Year never comes suddenly, nor can rice be produced suddenly. New Year's Day comes regularly at intervals of 365 days, and rice is obtained by sowing the seed in the spring, cultivating it during the summer, and reaping the grain in the autumn. You do not sow it in the spring nor cultivate it in the summer, so it follows, as a matter of course, that you have none to reap in the autumn and to eat in the winter. If I lend you some now,

how are you to pay it back to me? If you know you cannot repay it, then you are trying to deceive me. If you would eat *mochi* cakes at the New Year season you will have to stop your drinking and your idle habits; go to the mountains and gather fallen leaves, make manure and cultivate a field for the spring, sow rice seed, and reap your harvest in the autumn, then next year you may eat New Year *mochi* cakes which you have earned. Repent of your vices then, but do not hope for *mochi* for the coming New Year."

Genkichi was moved to repentance, and said, "It is true I have been very lazy and have taken too much *sake*, and I see now that I was wrong to hope to enjoy *mochi* like those who have been working hard all the year and earned it. I shall eat none this New Year, but from to-day I will stop drinking and will start working at my occupation, so that another year I may enjoy *mochi* cakes like my neighbours." So saying, Genkichi thanked Sontoku for his teaching and turned away. Then suddenly Sontoku called him back and asked, "Are you sure you have thoroughly understood my advice?" "Yes," replied Gen-

kichi. "I shall never forget it. I will stop drinking without fail and will work hard." Seeing that his repentance was genuine, Sontoku gave him a bag of *mochi* rice, another of plain rice, some vegetables, and a piece of gold to reward and encourage him in his new resolution; and from that day Genkichi was a different man, and lived a good and useful life.

Fukuzumi, one of Sontoku's best-beloved disciples, writes: "Sontoku's way of preaching differed according to the need of his hearers. When a Daimyo came for his advice and blamed his subjects, Sontoku taught him that he should love his people; and when the people complained to him of their governors, he would preach to them the moral virtue of obedience and loyalty. To angry creditors he preached pity for the poor; and to persecuted debtors he taught the dishonesty of not paying one's debts. All men he forbade to read the book called *Woman's Great Learning*, which deals with the duties of wives to their husbands."

In short, Sontoku always tried to lead people to blame themselves and not somebody else whenever anything went wrong, and so to win

a moral victory. There came to him once a man named Shibata, who had formerly been a wealthy merchant but had failed and was now extremely poor. He still had much money owing to him, but could not make up his mind to bring pressure to bear upon his debtors, because he had heard of the case of a poor debtor who committed suicide to escape the persecution of his creditor. Sontoku urged him to do anything rather than try to enforce collection of his debts from poor men, and telling him to take on himself all the blame for his losses, advised him to start afresh and work hard and earnestly. This Shibata did with such success that he later proved a benefactor to many villages.

Sontoku was a strong advocate of peace on all occasions, and denounced quarrelling and revenge as most foolish and unprofitable. He was frequently able to persuade people to adopt more rational and profitable courses. Here is a typical example:—A village headman having appropriated some rice, the villagers were on the point of appealing to the court, when Sontoku heard of the affair. He summoned the representatives of the villagers to him, and

having learned that about 200 bags of rice had been taken, he said to them, "200 bags of rice are worth about 80 *yen* in money; now there are 90 houses in your village, so the loss to each family is only about 90 *sen*. Is it worth while making so much fuss about so small a loss? You may not win your case in the court, and if you do, your expenses are sure to be heavy, not to mention the waste of time and energy—and altogether the village will be put to great loss. Already you have held several meetings at a considerable expense of time and money. Besides, the defendant has been your headman for a long time, and I cannot find any one among you who is likely to be able to succeed him. Now I want you to reconsider this case thoughtfully, and I should like you to excuse the defaulter this time. I shall revise your books and make regulations which will prevent the possibility of a repetition of the offence, and I will persuade the headman to take only half his salary and contribute the other half to the village fund. Further, I will let you have a piece of wild land, and all the cost of opening it up shall be paid you from the official funds. You had much better stop wasting your time

and energy in unprofitable quarrelling and accept this field, which will yield you 70 bags of rice this year, 90 bags next year, and over 100 in the year following. For three years you may divide the produce among you; from the fourth you will begin repaying the money spent in opening it up, and when these expenses are all repaid the field will belong to your village to help you all for ever." The representatives returned to consult their fellows, and all decided to accept Sontoku's offer and follow his advice. Sontoku thereupon went to the village, and praising them for adopting a peaceful and profitable method of settling their difficulty, he made them a generous present of food by way of encouragement. He then told them he would begin work on the wild land at daybreak next morning, and would pay good wages to all who came to work for him. All the villagers were delighted, and thanked Sontoku profoundly for his kindness, and finally abandoned their design of seeking redress in the court. When the headman learned of Sontoku's successful interposition, he was at once so ashamed and so grateful that he offered to surrender the whole of his salary to the village fund for

the space of five years to atone for his misdeed. Thus a grave and sordid quarrel, which must have caused irrecoverable loss to many, materially as well as morally, was splendidly averted; and this is but one instance out of a great number in which discord and contention were brought by Sontoku to a peaceful and profitable conclusion.

How was it that this man, who had never received an education, could teach men so well and reap such fruits of his teaching as no scholarly and well-trained professional preacher could do? The following description will furnish an eloquent answer to this question.

SONTOKU'S LIFE

Sontoku's achievements were great as social reformer, as philanthropist, and as preacher, but his real and lasting greatness lay in his life, so noble and so real.

Among the many relics of Sontoku is an old cash-book filled with such entries as the following :—

"4 Wooden Poles sold to Benzayemon.
2 Buckets and Firewood sold to Denzo.

8 Bags of Wheat sold to Horiuchi.
Old Fence sold to Kichigoro. . . ."

It is the record of the sale of the whole of his possessions, including his ancestral house and fields recovered after many years of constant and heavy toil and kept with loving concern until he was called on to give up everything and remove to Sakuramachi, to work for those who were suffering and in dire need. The object of the sale was not to pay off his debts, for he had none; nor to get rid of an encumbrance, for it was considered a shameful thing for a man to part with the home of his fathers; but solely that he might be enabled to help the people of Sakuramachi without receiving any salary or any financial assistance from outside, which he believed would do harm to his cause and hamper its success. He flatly refused to accept several thousand *ryo* allotted to him for relief work, nor would he take any salary whatever.

Is it to be wondered at that with such rare self-sacrifice, such a remarkable spirit of independence, and such great faith in moral power, he succeeded in the work which all other men thought impossible, and that without any material

help at all? How eloquently that old cash-book, insignificant as it appears, speaks of the nobility of Sontoku's life!

When he received the call from the Government to go to the Nikkō district to undertake the reform work there, he wished in his heart that he could stay at home and teach the disciples who flocked to hear him in ever-increasing numbers from all parts of the country. Then, too, his illness left him weak, and he fully realised that going to Nikkō meant hastening his death. His family and friends urged him to refuse the post, as he might easily have done; but he knew he must do, not what he wished or what his family wished, but what it was his mission to do. So he told his disciples how to continue the work after his death, and left for his last labours in Nikkō, and even the news that his only daughter lay dying could not call him away to his home. It was this spirit of perfect obedience to the voice of duty, at whatever cost, this complete devotion to the service of mankind even to the laying down of his life for their sake, which made his life one grand symphony, filled with inspiring melody and heavenly harmony.

The following incident gives us a glimpse into the more private life of this great man. His younger brother, Saburozayemon, tells us that he was praised by Sontoku on only one occasion during his whole life. Saburozayemon had sacrificed the greater part of his possessions for the sake of a friend who was in great need of money, and he says, "When my brother learned what I had done for my friend, tears came into his eyes, and he said to me in great joy, 'This act of sacrifice is almost more than I had dared to hope for from you. At last you have become a man!'" Blessed was Saburozayemon in having such a brother who could rejoice over his heavy loss, a loss which was in reality, however, a great and lasting gain.

Sontoku always lived very simply; his meals consisted only of rice and a vegetable soup, and he never wore anything but cotton. "It is enough," he said, "if our clothes protect us from the cold and our food keeps us from hunger. Beyond this they profit us nothing and simply hamper us." He attached much importance to this practice of simple living, and told his disciples that their first lesson should be to learn the truth and virtue of simple

living. This practice, while it reduced to a minimum the waste of time, thought, energy, and money on his own needs, must also have contributed to his good health, the clearness of his mind, and the short hours of sleep he required, in hardly less degree than did his strong spirit and iron will. Sontoku was a hard worker all his life. He did not sleep more than four hours a day, and when necessary he worked all night as well as all day. When journeying from village to village he sometimes took his sleep by the wayside to save time, much to the dismay of his followers.

There can be no doubt that Sontoku was pre-eminently a spiritually-minded man. How could such deep love for mankind, such strong faith in the truth of Heaven and earth, such piercing insight into human nature and into future events, such power and energy as could level mountains and raise valleys, such great moral conquests—how could these have come from the flesh alone? A man's ordinary strength and his outward vision is of necessity limited. Sontoku taught his disciples not to look at things with their erring eyes of flesh, so short-sighted and deceiving, but with their

inward vision, because the sight of the spiritual eyes is true and boundless.

Sontoku's spirituality and his practice of looking at things not with the outward but with the inward eyes, coupled with the simplicity of his life, which was a kind of constant fasting, and his continuous self-sacrifice, which was an unceasing prayer, may well explain his many wonderful works and his extraordinary power. Amidst raging storms and impenetrable darkness he saw the eternal light of Heaven, and felt Heaven's peace reigning supreme over all. Where other men saw nothing but utter failure and grievous loss, he detected glorious victory and lasting gain.

"The spirit of my teaching," said Sontoku once to his disciples, "will not pass away till the sun is darkened and the moon falls, for it is founded on the truth of Heaven and earth." Yes, his system may be superseded, the great results he attained may fade away, and all his work be forgotten, but the spirit of service to God and to His creatures, the spirit of perfect obedience to the will of Heaven, without counting the cost, and the spirit of disinterested love to all, as if they were his own

children—these springs of conduct, so beautifully and so clearly expressed in his life, will live and grow, a light to mankind, irrespective of religion or race, and will shine to the glory of God until the world passes.

THE END

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